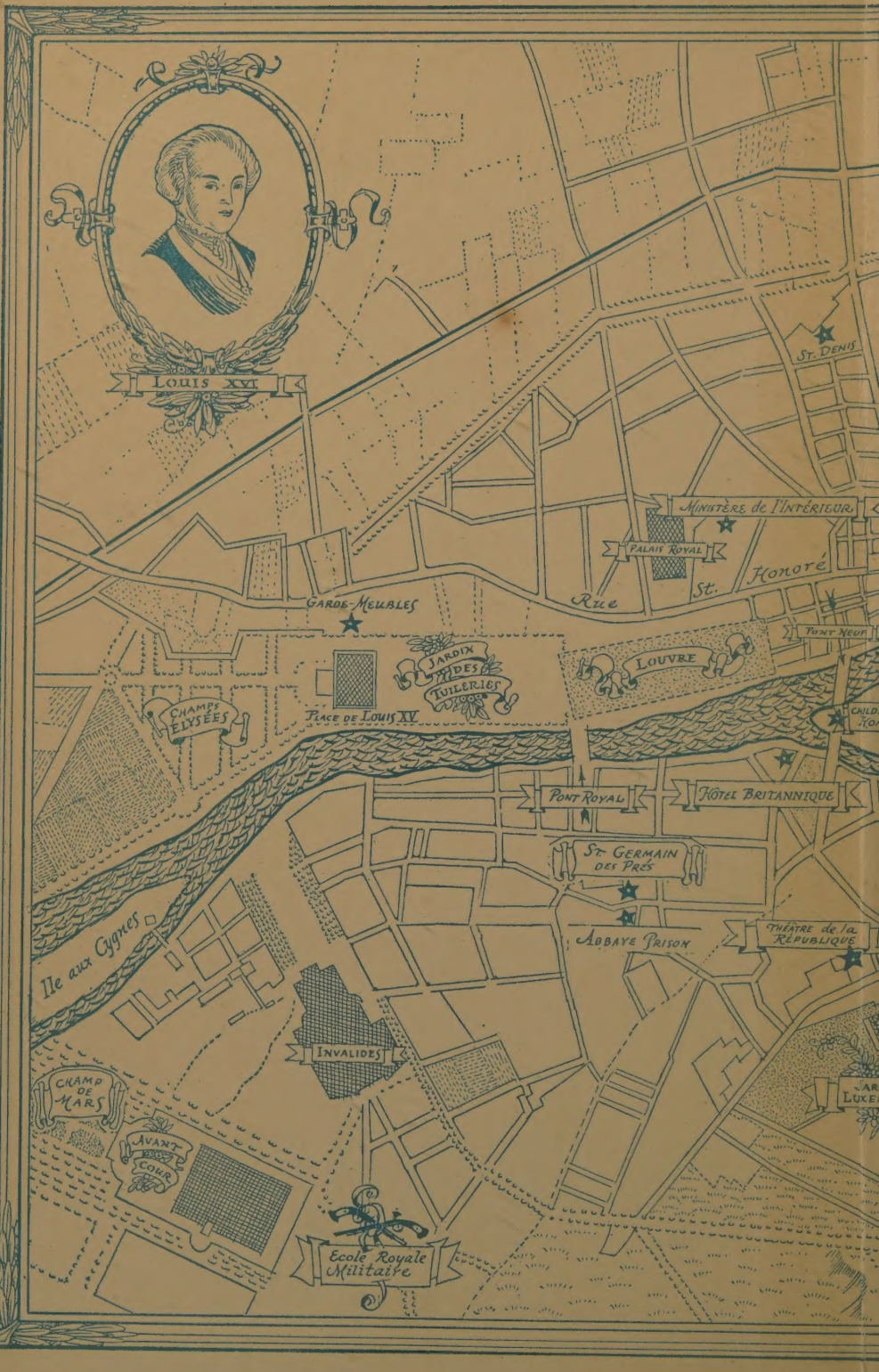
A DAUGHTER of the SEINE

JEANETTE EATON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Pont Royal
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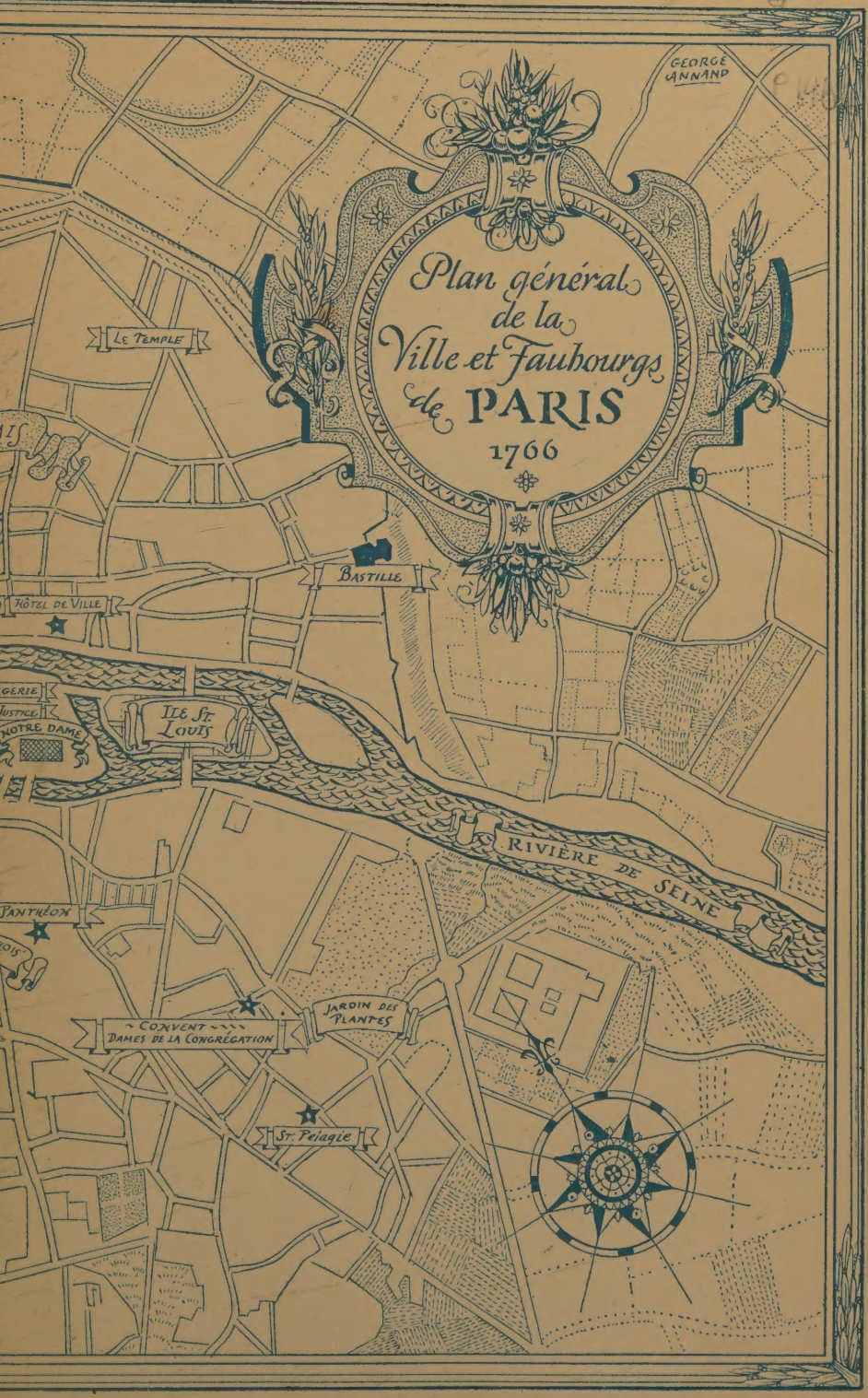

A DAUGHTER OF THE SEINE

Emma Elizabeth Snow

Christmas 1931

MARIE-JEANNE ROLAND DE LA PLATIERE, NEE PHILIPON

A DAUGHTER OF THE SEINE

The Life of Madame Roland

by

Jeanette Eaton

Harper & Brothers Publishers

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TO MY FATHER

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A DAUGHTER OF THE SEINE

Chapter One

THE wind was lively that March day in Paris. It whistled past the great square towers of Notre-Dame and whisked purple clouds across the fitful sunshine which tried to make the river sparkle. Then it shook and tossed the tall trees which lifted their heads over the Pont-Neuf at the end of the Cité. Suddenly with a mischievous gust it almost brought to a halt the three people who were making their way down one of the narrow muddy streets which cross the island.

"*Diable!* What a wind!" cried the sturdy man who was walking ahead of the other two, and he folded his cloak more closely about him.

As a matter of fact, there was a fourth person in the group. She was, indeed, the sole reason why the other three were on the street in the middle of the afternoon instead of being about their regular business. True, in appearance she was no more than a small bundle in the arms of the stocky old woman spryly hastening behind the leader. But now she advertised her presence by a loud wail of protest against the wind's rough play. Whereupon she was hugged a little tighter and given a brief pat. The caress was meant to remind her that she was on her way to a most important ceremony where she was expected to be as good as gold whether she were

comfortable or not. It was the only language she could understand. For this individual, having been born only the day before, was almost as young as she could be.

Soon the baby's three escorts had mounted a short flight of steps, pushed open a green baize door, and entered the cold darkness of a small church. There a smell of incense trickled through the dampness and a few candles burned before an altar. At the sound of their footsteps on the stone floor a bat-like figure glided from the shadows. It was Monsieur Roger, the priest.

Approaching the group with a smile of welcome, he said: "So you have brought the little one? You have certainly lost no time. That is well."

He conducted them across the church where in a recess stood a stone pedestal. For this occasion was, of course, the baby's baptism, the first of the seven sacraments of the Catholic Church. The child's sponsors were Gatien Philipon, the father; his uncle, the kind old Monsieur Jean-Baptiste Bernard; and his mother, Marie-Génevieve Rotisset, widow of Monsieur Philipon, the wine merchant. These two had walked all the way over from the parish of St. Eustache, far across the bridge, to be godfather and godmother to the new member of the family. And they beamed with satisfaction as the priest proceeded with the simple ceremony.

So it was that on the parish record the baby's name which was to designate one of the great and tragic figures of France first appeared in the written annals of Paris. Marie-Jeanne Philipon. The document

exists to this day, although the Church of St. Croix where she was baptized has long since disappeared. For this was on the eighteenth day of March, 1754, in the reign of Louis Fifteenth.

After the ceremony, little Marie was welcomed back by her mother and warmly snuggled into the great canopied bed in the little house on the near-by street of the Lanterne. Madame Philipon had already lost one baby and was to lose six others. From the first moment she poured over this only child the devotion of a simple and ardent nature.

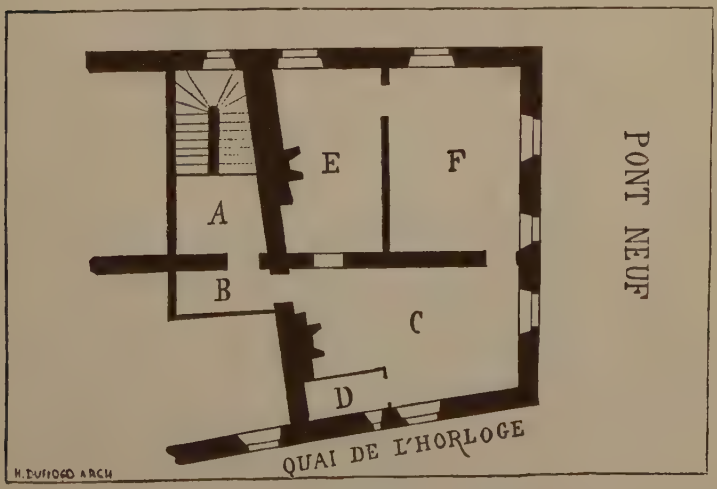
Therefore it was all the more strange that in a few weeks the cherished infant was sent away to the country to be cared for by a nurse. But such was the custom in France and it still is. Besides, the nurse was very carefully chosen and supervised by Aunt Bernard, wife of Marie-Jeanne's godfather, who knew the young woman well. The nurse loved the baby quite as if it had been her own. Under her care, little "Manon," as she was called, grew strong and rosy and in due time was toddling about the pretty garden and lisping her first syllables. Shortly after she was two years old she was brought back to her mother and father in Paris.

It is generally supposed by those who have traced the history of this celebrated little girl that by this time her father and mother had moved into a house facing the Pont-Neuf. That famous bridge, which spans the Seine at the very end of the island of the Cité, was, despite its name, an old, old bridge even in little Marie's time. Across it passed the life of the great city. There were shops upon it where crowds

gathered. Grand coaches rolled over it, carrying fine ladies and gentlemen to the Palace of the Louvre or to the Opéra. Now and then a fashionable dame would be carried by in a gilt chaise, borne by two lackeys in livery. Groups of rollicking students from the colleges on the left bank romped along the cobblestones on the way to see the world at the Tuileries Gardens. Monks and priests from the many monasteries padded soberly to and fro. And high over all these motley passers-by, with his mighty back to the river, sitting majestically on his prancing horse of bronze, stood the great statue of Henri Quatre, the glorious king who had lived a century and a half before this period.

No wonder his statue was placed there. He had completed this famous bridge. Moreover, he had embellished its middle section by building the Place Dauphine with its blocks of gabled houses all of rosy brick with trimmings of white stone. It was in one of these houses on the corner of the *quai*, facing the river and the statue of the builder, that Monsieur and Madame Philipon had taken up their abode. That section of the block stands there to this day, and although it is altogether different on the inside, the outside has been restored by the present owner just as it was first built three hundred years ago. People come from ever so far now to stand upon the Quai d'Horloge beside the river and look at the little house. They do so not because of its charm, not because it was built by Henri Quatre, but because little Marie Philipon, who became the great Madame Roland of history, lived there as a child.

THE PHILIPONS' HOUSE ON THE PONT-NEUF, SHOWING, ON THE SECOND FLOOR OF THE HOUSE AT LEFT, MARIE'S APARTMENT



PLAN OF PHILIPON APARTMENT. C—DRAWING-ROOM; D—SALON, CALLED "RETREAT"; E—BEDROOM; F—WORKSHOP

Nobody in the Cité then, however, would ever have dreamed that such would be the case. They were humble people, the Philipons. Marie's father was an engraver, and a good workman he was, too. Unfortunately, he did not know how to push his business. He thought he might make more money by dealing also in jewels. But, inasmuch as he knew no rich people and inasmuch as his shop had none of the elegance of the shops they liked to frequent, he never made his fortune and remained always a poor man.

Marie's mother was patient about all this. Indeed, she was patient and sweet about everything and accepted her lot without protest. She was helped by her deep religious feeling and her equally deep devotion to her little daughter, which devotion Marie returned fervently. She basked only in her mother's smile. Once when she had vexed Madame Philipon by some baby prank, she was addressed coldly by that beloved voice as "mademoiselle" and, stabbed to the heart by the icy blast of disapproval, she did her utmost to prove her contrition and to regain the confidence she had momentarily lost.

With her father Marie was by no means in such harmony. At a very early age she estimated him as a rough, commonplace man who had but a crude appreciation of his sensitive and precocious daughter. For at no time did our heroine underrate herself and seldom was she inclined to think herself in the wrong. Nevertheless, her estimate of Gatien Philipon was correct and she would be quite justi-

fied in modern eyes in her defiance of him on two momentous occasions.

The first battle occurred when she was about six years old. The child had been ill and her mother wished her to take a certain medicine. It smelled so vile that whenever it was thrust under her nose she felt her stomach turn over. "I am so sorry, *maman*," she wailed as she saw the look of weariness and worry on her mother's face, "but I just can't swallow that terrible stuff."

At this moment her father entered the room. "You will take it!" he shouted, and picking up a little switch from the fireplace he gave the rebel several sharp blows. She cried with indignation and pain, but still refused the nauseous draught. More blows and threats followed. Suddenly Marie's sobs ceased. She looked at her father with great dignity. "You may beat me as much as you like," she said, coolly, "but I shall never yield." Then pulling up her brief chemise to facilitate the punishment, she turned her face to the wall and waited in silence. At so early an age did this future heroine of France recognize that spirit can dominate the flesh and all the ills it is heir to. It became a ruling principle of her life.

Utterly distressed by this scene, Madame Philipon managed to get her fuming husband out of the room. She pulled the covers over her obdurate offspring and left her undisturbed for two hours. Then once more the mother, with tears in her eyes, begged the child to disobey no more, but to take the medicine at once. This she did. But to her

immense satisfaction she could not keep it on her stomach and grew immediately very much worse.

Her grown-up comment about the outcome of this incident shows an unchanged opinion of its significance. "I had then to be cured," she wrote, complacently, "by other means than by bad drugs and beatings. From that instant my father never laid hand upon me, hardly reproved me. He caressed me frequently, taught me to draw, took me for walks, and treated me with a goodness which made him more respected in my eyes and assured him of my entire submission."

Yes, there was always something of the self-satisfied little prig in Marie Philipon. But even great heroines must be permitted a few faults. Moreover, that very belief in her own convictions, her hatred of tyranny, and her austere judgment of others were elements in a character the force of which was to lift the future Madame Roland to heights unattainable by the weak and colorless. Furthermore, she really tried hard to be good and was ambitious, industrious, and clever. She never had to be taught to read, but in her eagerness of mind she learned all by herself. Soon she was poring over the Old and New Testaments and pondering their treasures of wisdom.

It is hard to imagine the quietness of the life pursued by a little French girl of lower middle-class family in that era. Marie's existence was typical. She had few friends of her own age, never went to children's parties, knew no games or sports, and never played on the street. Indeed, she never

went out alone except to the corner to buy fruit or groceries for her mother. Sent on such errands, she took pride in being exceedingly polite. For she soon discovered that not only did good manners assure her immediate and satisfactory service in the shop, but to have them was the very best way to demonstrate her superiority over the rough little gamins of the neighborhood. "Lively without being noisy," as she said of herself, she shared the housework with her mother, mastered the art of making soup and flaky omelettes, helped the cook scrub the pots, learned to sew, and spent the rest of the time in reading and dreaming at the window.

The Paris she looked down upon was in some ways more different from the city of today than it was from the Gallic settlement once occupied by the Romans of Cæsar's time. For Marie lived before the mechanical inventions and discoveries which have made the modern world. Nobody had yet found out how to use steam or gas, gasoline or electricity. Houses were lighted by candles and lamps filled with vegetable or whale oil. Oil-filled lanterns, hung on posts, redeemed the streets from the utter blackness brought by nightfall. One of Marie's baby memories was of these lights along the streets, which she called "pretty bottles." On the river below her window, where now the little steamers ply, she saw only sailboats or rowing-skiffs. For in those days one could travel on the water only under canvas and on the land by horse-drawn vehicles.

Practically everything people used was made by

hand-tools. And they were well made, too. Furniture was never more elegant, silks and cloth never finer, jewels never more perfectly set. As for the houses, despite the fact that they had no running water or any form of modern plumbing except drain pipes, they were solidly constructed and—could the owner but afford it—superbly finished with woodwork and decorations. There were great artists in those days, and philosophers, scientists, and statesmen. But because books and travel were expensive, because most people had to work very hard and usually with their hands to earn money enough to live, there was a greater gap between social groups and more illiterate people even in Paris then than now you could find the whole country over. There were three main classes—the nobles, the middle class or *bourgeoisie*, and the peasants. The last named worked in the fields and were closely bound by law to the owners of the land. In the cities this group had no special name, but consisted of workmen employed in printshops and on silk and cotton looms. The *bourgeoisie*, on the other hand, had many social grades. A butcher with a tiny shop belonged to one of the lower ranks of the middle class. At its top stood wealthy farmers, great silk merchants, and jewelers of international reputation. Somewhere in between came the craftsmen who made furniture and bric-à-brac and the professional men—doctors, lawyers, clerks, notaries, apothecaries. All but rich folk lived in a very restricted fashion, and in this respect the parents of little Manon were no exception.

Had they been moneyed people Marie might have been taught to ride a horse, she might have played at archery or had a garden in which to romp. But she had to content herself with what her family could provide and it was little enough. They probably occupied but one floor of the small three-story house, and since it stood on the corner of two thoroughfares it possessed no garden at all. So it was very fortunate that Marie had not only a happy disposition, but a passion for using that active mind of hers.

If only she'd had the opportunities of a certain little boy who had been born the same year that she was, how much she would have made of them! For this child had everything he wished to play with, gardens in which to roam, ponies to ride, great libraries at his disposal, fencing masters and tutors galore. He wore fine clothes of silk and satin. He had ladies-in-waiting to amuse him. But, although he was a good little boy and sat through tiresome ceremonies with great patience, he looked at everything with a dull eye. He liked to eat and sleep a great deal, hated to be dressed up, and felt superior to nobody. This was a great pity. For the little boy was the eldest grandson of the ruling king and was to be king himself when he was twenty.

Yes, Louis the Sixteenth was born the same year as Marie-Jeanne Philipon. And whereas her coming was welcomed by only her parents and relatives, the arrival of tiny Louis had rejoiced the whole nation. Guns boomed and couriers on horseback dashed to Paris to spread the news. For Louis was

born at Versailles, the vast palace which his great-great-great-grandfather, Louis the Fourteenth, had built some ten miles from the capital. All the court gathered there and it was the most gorgeous royal mansion in the world.

But the beauty of its gardens, terraces, and fountains, the majesty of the great *salons* with their ceilings painted by noted artists, their exquisite chandeliers, handsome furniture and tapestries only served as a setting for the wickedest frivolities. Gambling, intrigue, irregularities of every kind went on continually. Money was squandered with utter heedlessness by people who lived only to amuse themselves. Why not? Didn't the king, Louis' grandfather, set the pace by leading a life as selfish and dissolute as it could possibly be?

To look back upon those times is ever to find it strange that the hard-working people of France, who had to pay taxes to support those courtiers and that palace, made no protest. True, there were a number of great writers who dared to cry out against the corruption. But the general sentiment was indifference and hopelessness. Peasants, farmers, and the good, stupid artisans like Monsieur Philipon were simply too busy with their own affairs to pay much attention to national issues. Besides, as long as people actually believed that the king's power came directly from God and had no idea they possessed any right to change conditions, they naturally submitted to every royal outrage. Thus it was that Prince Louis and Marie Philipon, ten miles apart, began to grow up in a France which was getting

poorer and more wretched every minute. And because of this general misery and injustice the two children were destined to contend with each other thirty years hence and to perish of the contest.

One curious difference between that time and ours was that children had to be privileged characters to go to school. Instead of free schools there were private tutors or boarding-schools connected with convents and monasteries. Only because so naturally ambitious and intelligent a race as the French put learning above pleasure were children of the middle and lower classes given the benefit of education.

Marie Philipon was tutored in geography, history, and penmanship. She had a number of lessons on the guitar, was taught to dance, and was given instruction by her father in drawing. It was a course of study decidedly hit-or-miss. But Marie took it very seriously. She always woke up about five in the morning, before anyone else was astir. Slipping on a little jacket and not even stopping to put on her shoes, she would tiptoe noiselessly into her mother's room, where on a small table her work was laid out. There, as still as a mouse, she would copy out her lessons and repeat her examples till the sun rising over the Hôtel de Ville across the river and the carts rumbling over the bridge to market waked the household.

One day when she was nearly seven years old her mother said to her, "*Mignonne*, you are going to begin a new kind of lesson today. I'm going to take

you to the Church of Saint Barthélemy for instruction before your confirmation."

And so they set out along the *quai*, walked past the Conciergerie, that grim old prison behind the Palais de Justice which one day Marie was to know so well, and finally arrived at the old church in its wide garden. She had often been there with her mother on Sunday. This time, however, they went no farther into the building than one of the tiny chapels near the door. There they found a number of benches in rows facing each other across a wide space in the middle of which on a low platform was placed a red velvet chair. Already a number of children were wriggling about on their seats, the little boys on one side and the girls on the other.

"What's the chair for, *maman?*" whispered Marie.

"For the priest who is going to teach you," replied Madame Philipon. And disengaging her hand from the tiny one within it, she indicated where Marie was to sit. She herself withdrew among the *bonnes* and the other *mamans* to the back row to share with them the instruction of the children.

This consisted, as Marie soon discovered, of learning by heart some of the Gospels and Epistles, the daily prayers and the doctrine of the Church which is called the catechism. The teacher explained the meaning of the lesson and talked over the new assignment. Now and then the *curé* of the church would come in to see how the young priest was succeeding with his pupils. The moment he ap-

peared all the pupils rose and bowed. Then he would single out a few individuals and ask them questions—a procedure which made their mothers squirm with anxiety.

One day Monsieur Garat, the *curé* of Saint Barthélemy, came in with that look in his eye which revealed a hope to catch somebody napping. He pounced upon Marie. "Tell me, little one," he demanded, "how many orders of spirits are in the heavenly hierarchy?"

But Marie was not perturbed. With the calm smile of one who knows the answer, she replied, "There are only a few of them mentioned in the preface of the mass, monsieur *le curé*, but I have seen somewhere else that there are altogether nine." And she proceeded to recite them all. From this moment her reputation as the most studious child in the Cité was established.

Soon she was placed under the instruction of a young uncle who was a priest of her own parish. And she made such progress that, much to the entire family's delight, she had soon carried off first prize. As a result the proud young man offered to give her private lessons in Latin. Marie was enchanted. She conjugated and declined with the greatest possible ardor. Unfortunately, however, the teacher's enthusiasm was less constant than his pupil's. Uncle Bimont was very busy with his church offices and when not on duty the gaiety of his warm nature impelled him rather to relaxation than to further effort. He much preferred to play with his niece than to cram her with Latin constructions and was

always begging off from his determined small task-master.

The child adored this young uncle and the hope of his presence always gleamed on the horizon of the trying Sunday she frequently spent at the house of her maternal grandmother. Madame Bimont had been paralyzed many years ago and sat helpless in her chair, querulous and unreasonable as a sick child. If Marie was gay and full of dancing movements, as she often was, her grandmother would begin to cry. If, on the other hand, she fell and hurt herself, the old woman would burst into cracked laughter. It was certainly very vexing.

True, there was the good old housekeeper to pet her and give her a delicious luncheon. Marie loved going into the dark old kitchen with its great oaken beams hung with onions and long sausages and the vast stove where copper pots gleamed and where over the snapping fire the chicken was turned on the spit. She would have crusty bread, also, and fresh cheese, and sometimes, as a great treat, strawberries. After she had finished the meal, however, there was nothing amusing to do. She wearied of listening to the stories the housekeeper repeated to her grandmother and wearied of telling stories herself. There were no books to read except the psalter which she had conned over and over. No wonder she rejoiced on those rare occasions when the young priest could dash home between services to see his little niece. Then he would play with her, make her dance and sing, and fill the gloomy rooms with sudden sunshine.

One Sunday Marie rebelled at staying with her grandmother. They had gone as usual after morning mass to the house. But when Madame Philipon was about to leave Marie burst into tears. "Don't make me stay, *maman!*" she begged. "It's so dull and stupid here."

Her mother looked at her gravely. "Very well, Manon. You may go home and see that your father's dinner is well served. I shall stay in your place."

At first the child was delighted. To be sure, she found her father rather grumpy. But there were her books and the panorama of the river and there was no strange old creature to startle her with imbecile cackles and groans. As evening drew on, however, and her mother did not return Manon began to feel a strange sense of guilt. Even the lamplighters finally appeared to fill, trim and light the lanterns on the *quai* and still Madame Philipon had not come.

Finally Marie heard the bell of the *concierge* ring in the street below. She opened the door into the hall and stood at the head of the narrow stairs to watch her mother come up. Madame Philipon looked pale with fatigue, but possessed of a sort of holy calm. Marie, uneasy and contrite, envied her mother that look and did not know why. A few days later this was explained to her. "To spend the day with a helpless old lady who belongs to you," said her mother gently, "is a rigorous and touching duty which does you honor. No true daughter of France shirks her duty." The words fell softly on

Marie's heart and melted away the sense of rebellion that had filled it. The lesson built another sturdy stone into the foundation of her character.

Utterly different in kind were the weekly visits to her father's mother. Madame Philipon senior was a lively old lady who, as a nurse and governess in a great household, had seen in her youth something of the world. Her grandchild later described her as "a little woman of excellent spirit and fine disposition, whose agreeable manners, gracious laugh and mischievous glance announced the claim of pleasing still or—at least—the memory of having once pleased. She was then sixty-five or sixty-six years old, dressed with care and appropriateness for her age and prided herself above all on feeling and observing the conventions of good form." She and her grandchild were tremendous friends.

To understand clearly how little Marie Philipon became the great Madame Roland of history you must take well into account the books she read between the ages of six and eleven years. Remember that there were few books for children in those days, no children's libraries—indeed only one or two libraries in all of Paris, and these were for the use of scholars. But that eager youngster could smell the presence of a book as a cat smells a mouse in its hole. Prowling about the apartment one day she made a thrilling discovery. One of the young men who worked in her father's shop was bringing books to read in odd moments and although he hid them away with his coat in a little alcove outside

the shop, it was not from Manon. The first time she chanced upon this treasure trove she chose a volume at random, made off with it, and devoured it on the spot.

After this she perfected a system of reading while the young man was at work and returning the booty in time to avoid detection. Luckily the unconscious purveyor of literature was a person of taste. He brought travel books, a few plays, Plutarch's *Lives* which Marie simply adored. Thus she also came to know *Télémaque*, the famous book by Fénelon which fifty years before this time offered so clear a criticism of the extravagant reign of Louis Fourteenth that the author was publicly disgraced. Despite the youth of the reader, the book conveyed to her the significant fact that a wise man had dared to criticize a ruling king and without a doubt it proved a seed which was later to bring forth fruit.

Translations of the Italian poet, Tasso, excited her imagination to the point of trembling and weeping over the fate of his characters. Indeed, the romantic child, who felt that now she understood what love meant, fancied herself for some weeks enamored of a shy young painter who sometimes came to work with her father. As soon as she heard his voice in the shop she would find herself absolutely obliged to search there for a pencil. But once in his presence she became so uncomfortably embarrassed that immediately she would have to retreat in order to hide her blush and quiet her breathing.

Manon sometimes wondered what her mother would say to her book-borrowing propensities. And one day she received a most surprising enlightenment. On the way to filch another book she met her mother coming out of the alcove. In her hands was one of the young man's volumes. Stopping face to face, the two exchanged a long look. Manon's heart gave a bound. So! Her mother, also, was hungry for learning. She, too, had joined the secret circulating library. Neither said a word about this mutual discovery either then or later. Their tacit understanding was only admitted by Madame Philipon's subsequent requests that Marie should read aloud to her as she sat fashioning a petticoat beside the fire. And you may believe that, like every other daughter who is careful about her mother's upbringing, Marie chose only the most sober works for these occasions and reserved such descriptions as that of Calypso's isle for her own consumption.

She had a glorious place to read. It was in the little *salon* where she received instruction from the visiting tutors. The room was decorated with mirrors and several pictures and was lighted by a little window. Under this stood a bed so crowded back into the space that to mount to it she had to climb over a chair, a table, and several benches. This was her retreat. Here she could listen to the carillons from La Samaritaine. Here she could look up from her book to see the clouds sail over the Pont-au-Change and dream of the wonderful life she was going to lead when once she was grown up.

Had the gentle Madame Philipon, who was so austere about duty, not sympathized with her child's pursuit of literature, it would have gone hard with Marie. Every adult of that era was not so tolerant. Girls were not supposed to know much besides how to cook, sew, and manage a house. Of course, they were permitted to dabble in music and drawing, but certainly not to develop ideas. Manon hadn't realized her good luck until one afternoon when she sampled a typical bit of adult hostility to the range of her youthful intellect. This was offered by one of her mother's friends. The visitor had been in the house some time and had even persuaded the serious Madame Philipon to while away the rainy afternoon with *piquet*—the favorite card game of the period. Marie, curled up by the window in one corner, was lost to the world in the pages of a book.

Her mother left the room for a moment on some errand and the visitor's roving eye fell upon the absorbed child. "What's the book you're reading, little Manon?" she asked. "Come here and show it to me!"

Politely and in all innocence Manon presented her volume for inspection. It was Voltaire's *Candide*, that delicious satire, which is crammed with the frankest allusions to all sorts of matters about which little girls are supposed to be quite ignorant. As the visitor looked and gasped Madame Philipon reëntered the room.

"My dear friend!" exclaimed the woman. "Surely you are not permitting your little girl to read a book like this? But—it isn't possible!"

Manon's mother, without comment, merely said, "Put the book away where you got it, dear." And, with a baleful glance at the interfering adult, Manon did so. She feared the worst from this incident. But her mother said nothing further and questioned her no more than before concerning her choice of reading matter. Consequently, Marie was mentally mature at an early age and was proof against being shocked at any natural fact.

Even her father made his contribution to Marie's store of books. Whenever he had a little extra money he would bring her a volume. To be sure, they were usually solemn dissertations upon education or upon the best way to bring up the young. But all was grist to her busy little mill and she would ponder them wisely and wonder if she were growing up according to the best counsel.

Don't think for a moment, however, that, studious as she was, Marie-Jeanne Philipon had no interest beyond the printed page. She loved flowers. She loved to watch the sky and the river and the ever changing pageant of the Pont-Neuf. Almost more than anything, however, she liked to dress up and go for a promenade with her parents on Sundays and holidays. She appreciated the fact that her mother, who herself dressed so simply, lavished both time and money on the costumes of her petted child.

The latter had a little frock of wine-colored silk made with a tight bodice and a voluminous skirt which came down to the toes of her shoes in front and fell in a short train behind. The sleeves, which

stopped at the elbow, were frilled with lawn to match the collar and edgings of the bodice. On cold days she wore a velvet jacket of green or a deeply collared blue cape. Of course, during the week she donned a linen frock quite loose and simple with a fichu round the neck. But even so it just escaped the ground in length. No wonder small girls did very little running or jumping in those days. Dressed almost exactly like grownups, they were expected to behave with equal decorum.

Those Sunday promenades usually took them where everybody else in Paris went—to the Tuileries gardens. These were set out somewhat as they are today on the right bank of the river beyond the Palace of the Louvre. Then they were not far from the western limits of the city. But now they seem right in the heart of it. Moreover, they are more extensive now, for since that day the Palace of the Tuileries has disappeared.

These two palaces in the eighteenth century had yielded in favor with the kings of France to the great edifice at Versailles and to the luxurious châteaux out in the country. Nevertheless, certain members of the royal family still lived in them, and to catch a glimpse of them was almost as alluring as to observe the statuary, the fountains, and the flowers in the stately gardens. One was likely to see, also, some of the actors from the Comédie Française or noblemen in satin knee breeches and handsome swords and fine ladies in lawn and silk.

Not one of these glories escaped the lively dark eyes of little Manon. As she strolled along, hold-

ing her father's hand, she felt that in such a setting she was quite at home. She was fully conscious that she looked like a rich little girl who had chosen for a mere whim to descend from her elegant *chaise* and mingle with the common people. So she walked proudly and carried her head in its frilled satin bonnet very high.

Of course, there were other festive opportunities for donning her best clothes. Now and then there would be a wedding in the family connection, a New Year's day fête or a ceremonial baptism. And the child made the most of such possibilities, you may be sure. The only thing she didn't like about dressing up was the necessity of having her long, thick, chestnut hair arranged. Her mother would curl it in ringlets and fasten it over high paddings with loops and twists according to the intricate fashion of the day. Manon thought such coiffures absurd and barbarous and, indeed, they were. Yet she submitted as every woman must to the dictates of the mode.

All in due time the religious instruction which Marie had received at Saint Barthélemy brought her toward the confirmation ceremony. And as the years sped on she approached the taking of her first communion. The solemnity of this step was profoundly felt in her serious little heart. She put aside all other books for religious reading and meditated long on the meaning of Eucharist. Indeed, she drifted into a state of pious emotion and began to think perhaps she might devote her life to the Church.

One night when her father and mother were sitting beside the chimney piece in casual talk Marie came in and stood before them. Suddenly she flung herself down on her knees in a burst of violent weeping. "*Chérie!* What is the matter?" cried her mother in astonished disquiet. "What ails thee, child?" asked her father anxiously.

Marie clung to them more tightly. "I've come to ask you something which rends my heart and yet which my conscience demands," she sobbed. "Send me to a convent!"

Her parents lifted her to her feet. She could see that her mother was deeply moved. "But why do you wish to enter a convent, darling?" asked Madame Philipon. "Isn't this a strange request for such a reasonable little girl to make?"

Marie told them then that she wished before her first communion to take intensive preparation in a convent school, that such an event meant too much to be taken less seriously and that, terribly hard as it would be to leave her home, she felt that she owed it to the Lord to make the sacrifice.

To her surprise her father applauded her earnestness. And without much further question he began to discuss with his wife ways and means of satisfying what seemed to be an imperative need of this fervent nature. Boarding school would cost something, certainly, and yet nothing less than an excellent school would do. Finally the Philipons decided on a convent conducted by the Ladies of the Congregation in the Faubourg Saint-Marcel on the left bank. The convent, which exists no longer,

stood south and east of the great Panthéon where the heroes of France lie gloriously entombed. One can imagine the peaceful walled gardens where the nuns walked two by two and the creamy old buildings, vine-covered and mellow in the calm of the warm spring sun.

It was hard for the loving little Marie to kiss her mother good-bye at this first parting. But it was also exciting to be going to a different life, to meet girls of her own age at the school and to enter into new adventures of the spirit. She felt the tremulous elation of leaving childhood behind her. It was on the seventh of May, 1765, when the convent gate swung open for her to pass in and she was just eleven years and two months old.

Chapter Two

ALL her life Manon remembered that first night at the convent. Long after she had gone to bed she lay struggling piteously against homesickness. Suddenly something drew her to the window. At her very first glance the pinching ache in her heart expanded in a bound of joy. What beauty! Through the gigantic shadows of the tall trees in the garden the moonlight traced patterns of loveliness. Through it floated upward the dewy smell of flowers; above spread the vast sweep of moonlit sky and all about was profound, enfolding silence. She leaned against the window frame filling her heart with images of peace and turned away, at last, uplifted by the sudden knowledge that such visions brought sure anodyne to pain.

The school consisted of thirty-four pupils whose ages ranged from six to sixteen years. Marie, because of her mien of grave maturity, was placed with the older group, but even to these girls she felt somewhat superior both in manners and in scholarship. It took her only a few weeks to become "teacher's pet," praised and caressed by the nuns and singled out to give the right answers and the best demonstrations. With such a handicap it's a wonder the child had any friends. She was saved by her sweet, obliging temper and her incapacity

for "telling tales." Moreover, her companions soon discovered that, for all her self-consciousness, she was genuine about all her emotions whether they involved excitement over an interesting lesson or response to the majesty of the church services.

One of the most impressive of these occurred shortly after Marie's arrival. A young novice "took the veil," publicly consecrating her life to the Church. Marie was stirred to the depths by the ceremony. Masses of flowers, gleaming candles, curtains of shining silk, magnificent ornaments of silver and gold on the altar—such was the sumptuous setting for the dramatic scene. Crowds of people, dressed as if for a wedding, filled the church and the chapels and even thronged the porch outside.

The ritual began when the young novitiate appeared behind the grille for a last look at the world she had renounced. Then as the organ burst forth into sonorous peals she came out before the altar in the guise of a bride of the Church with long white veil crowned by a chaplet of roses. In a voice which trembled just a little she sang the customary elegy beginning, "It is here that I have chosen my dwelling. Here will I establish myself for ever." At the end of the chant she took the sacred vows and sank prostrate before the altar. At this point occurred the most awe-inspiring part of the ceremony. Two nuns came forward and flung over the little prone figure a great black cloth to signify that henceforth she was dead and buried to worldly things.

With such intensity had Marie Philipon followed every step of this tremendous scene that for the moment she was that young girl. It was she who had renounced her mother, her home, and all that she held dear. When the black cloth fell she burst into a torrent of tears no less devastating because it was silent. Indeed, to so sensitive a child even the relatively unimportant rite of taking her own first communion was racking. When the moment came to rise from her seat and go before the altar, she was too much overcome to move and had to be assisted by the comforting competence of a nun.

However, such climaxes of emotion were happily few. Marie was soon absorbed in that most fascinating of all youthful adventures, the making of a new friend. Her name was Sophie Cannet. She belonged to an excellent family of Amiens and had been sent to the school with her eighteen-year-old sister, Henriette. The latter had an impetuous and generous frankness which years later was to draw her closer to Marie than Sophie. But at this time it was the reflective tranquillity of the younger girl which endeared her the more to Manon. Soon the two were inseparable. They would walk up and down the garden path or the long corridors arm in arm, talking of religion and of life's grave problems with all possible ardor.

One event which happened this year was an unfailing topic of interest between them. The Dauphin, as the crown prince is called in France, suddenly died at the palace of Versailles and immediately his eldest son became Dauphin in his

place. "Imagine!" cried Manon, "a little boy just my age before whom grown people bow down!"

Indeed, Louis was an object of speculation to an entire nation, for he would be king the moment his grandfather died. True, that event did seem remote. Louis Fifteenth had every air of intending to enjoy his easy life of pleasure for many years. Since the costly and disastrous Seven Years' War had come to an end, the monarch had abandoned all public ambition for the sake of self-indulgence. His court, his favorites, his retinue gobbled up all the money which came into the treasury, and the king indifferently left most of the cares of government and of providing that money to his ministers.

Contented as they were, Marie and Sophie had no idea how exceptional was their good fortune. Probably the majority of French children those years went to bed every night hungry and cold and sad. Thousands of mothers and fathers worried day and night because when all the taxes were paid to the lord of their lands and to the village and to the king there was almost nothing left to feed and clothe their children and themselves. Ignorant and helpless as they were, the peasants had in addition to their hard work and their anxiety the bitterness of knowing that they alone paid their full share of the taxes. The nobles, the abbots, and the bishops who lived on great estates, even the wealthy traders and big farmers, managed to avoid paying what they were supposed to pay. But as long as he had plenty to spend on hunting lodges and lovely

ladies and his relatives, Louis Fifteenth cared little enough whether taxation was fair or not. And most people were so used to this state of things that like Marie and Sophie they remembered the king in their prayers every night.

One day this was going to be very different. Marie, like thousands of others, was to care very much whether the common people had a square deal and whether the king helped to straighten out affairs. But just now she found life altogether too delightful to be troubled about anything. She had made another friend, this time one of the nuns whose name was Sister Sainte Agathe. Hers was the duty of serving the children at table, making their beds, and looking after their comfort. Marie soon found Sister Agathe singling her out for little special attentions and swooping down upon her with swift caresses when the two met in the corridor. Then Marie was invited to the tiny cell where Sister Agathe had a tame canary which could talk. Everyone in the convent began to discuss the friendship between the nun and "the little Philipon."

"What do you suppose Mother Gertrude said to me just now?" whispered Sister Agathe one day as she drew Manon into her cell. "She said, 'You are loving that Philipon child too much.' But I only laughed and asked her if she herself ever met you without a sweet word or the gift of a bonbon. Since she couldn't deny it, she went off mumbling to herself." And the nun laughed merrily.

What stories Marie had to tell her mother when she saw her on Sundays! Every week Monsieur

Philipon would come for his little girl and as a prologue to the visit home would take her a walk in the Jardin des Plantes and then along the river which the little girl loved so well. And what with these excursions and her studies and friendships Marie's year of boarding school rolled away almost before she knew it.

Yet as it turned out she did not even then return home. Monsieur Philipon had undertaken some community work which took him away from his shop a great deal, and his wife was consequently too busy managing both house and shop to give Manon proper attention. So it was thought best she should go straight from the convent to her grandmother Philipon. All the nuns kissed Marie good-bye with gentle expressions of affection. Sister Agathe and Sophie Cannet wept over her. "We shall miss you sorely," each of them said to her. "Promise you'll come back to visit us!" And Manon promised, hugging them tight, and departed in the mournful elation which is every little girl's due at such a moment.

Grandmother Philipon lived in what ever since Henri Quatre's time has been one of the most charming sections of Paris. Her little apartment was on the Ile Saint-Louis, the middle one of the three islands which then stood in the Seine. Later, the smallest island was joined to the main-land. The Ile Saint-Louis had few bridges in those days and consequently was somewhat cut off from the rest of the city and very tranquil, indeed. The house in which Madame Philipon had rooms was on one of

the several narrow streets which cross the island from north to south and which on bright days are like tubes of sunshine laid between the two streams of sparkling water. With the brisk old lady lived her sister Angélique who did all the work not performed by the charwoman. Angélique would rise early to take Marie to mass and on their return would spread before her the hot chocolate, flaky rolls, and *confiture* which the French still think is quite enough for anybody until noon.

Every morning Marie would study her lessons and nearly every afternoon the household would receive a visit from her great-aunt, Madame Bernard. This visitor was always protesting her conviction that Marie was being horribly spoiled—a great pity, too, when the child was so intelligent and sweet. And when Marie overheard her grumbling she laughed to herself. For nobody knew better than she what a humbug was Aunt Bernard. The stern disciplinarian was always asking whether the child's bed was soft enough and her food sufficiently nourishing, and if Marie so much as hurt her finger the old lady would come in twice a day to see how she was.

It was a happy and ordered life. Marie loved to stroll along the *quais* with one of her three guardians and gaze up at the beautiful palace—just as beautiful today—where Lauzun had lived so romantically in the time of Louis le Grand. She loved to watch the sleepy boats crawling in with fish and, best of all, to stand on the quai d'Orléans so closely facing the back of Notre-Dame. The

sunset light falling on the splendid curves of the flying buttresses and on the leaping spires made her heart quiver with ecstasy. She felt that the river had flowed into her very being. Once she said to her grandmother, "I call myself the daughter of the Seine." Once or twice she visited the convent and by special dispensation of the Bishop was allowed to take part in a *grande fête* given by the school. There were booths for sweetmeats and a lottery and a little play with dancing afterwards. Marie played her guitar and sang. Oh, it was tremendous fun!

But all that was part of her swiftly passing childhood. The visit which really counted as a stepping stone toward maturity this year was the one made to the wealthy Madame de Boismorel. This was the woman with whom Marie's grandmother had worked as maid and governess before her marriage and since she had expressed a desire to see the wonderful grandchild, Madame Philipon proudly took Marie to call upon her one day.

Dressed in their best the two crossed the bridge from the Ile Saint-Louis and walked through the winding streets to that section of Paris still known as the Marais because once, ages ago, it had been a salty marsh. It is today the most unchanged part of the historic city, with an occasional Gothic tower hanging over the street and the lovely Place de Vosges standing just as Henri Quatre left it at the beginning of the seventeenth century. Nearby is the Carnavalet Museum, once the house of Madame de Sévigné whose published volume of delightful

letters to her daughter is among the most famous memoirs of France. Marie had read those letters and wondered as she tripped sedately along whether the personage she was now to see would be a charming *grande dame* of the same order with witty conversation and beautiful manners. That was the sort of contact for which she longed. But disillusion awaited her.

Her first shock came at the entrance of the house. For there, in the apartment of the *concierge* the servants fell upon the visitors with a familiarity of welcome which plainly indicated that they felt no social difference between the newcomers and themselves. "What?" thought Marie in amazement. "Am I no better than a servant—I who have been to boarding school and can read Latin?" And she was glad when they stopped stroking her hair and pinching her cheeks and escorted the guests across the court and up the carpeted stone steps to the *salon* of Madame de Boismorel.

Assuredly Marie had never seen anything so grand. The huge room with its gilded cornices was hung with pictures and tapestry and filled with handsomely painted furniture. Before the marble mantelpiece on an ottoman with a little dog beside her sat a stout woman, elaborately dressed. As the visitors were announced by the lackey, she laid down the piece of embroidery on which she was working, rose and came forward with a loud, cheerful exclamation of greeting. But the form it took dealt to Marie Philipon her first social slap. Far more clearly than the familiarity of the servants did the

words of Madame de Boismorel place Marie and her grandmother in the class of inferiors.

"Ah, *bonjour*, Mademoiselle Rotisset!" That was what she said. Mademoiselle Rotisset! The maiden name of Madame Philipon! The use of it sharply recalled to Marie's mind the fact that people of the lower classes were never addressed as "Madame" by their superiors. But never until this moment had she heard these snobbish distinctions made. Everyone she had ever met had always politely addressed her dignified little grandmother by her married name. So! They were the inferiors of this loud-voiced, red-faced woman, their hostess, were they! What an outrage!

Marie's pride, wounded to death, withdrew quiveringly from the cordial patronage of Madame de Boismorel. She resented being called "a handsome child" and asked a thousand questions. With the utmost frigidity she replied to them. But her tormentor seemed only amused by such hauteur. "She is very solemn, Mademoiselle Rotisset. Aren't you just a little bit pious, my child?"

"I know my duties. I endeavor to fulfil them." The more murderous Manon felt, the icier became her tone.

"So? You wish to become a nun, do you not?"

What impertinence! Her lips governed their rage sufficiently to utter: "I do not know my destiny. I do not seek to determine it."

"Mercy, how sententious she is!" exclaimed Madame de Boismorel, now really irritated. "She

reads, your granddaughter, doesn't she, Mademoiselle Rotisset?"

And Marie's grandmother beamed and nodded and replied to all the questions with a responsiveness that but increased the child's fury. She was glad, indeed, when the two elders withdrew their attention from her and plunged into a pool of worldly gossip and anecdotes a little off-color. She wished to be left alone to think. She wanted to find out why it was that an old vulgarian like that was an aristocrat and a virtuous and clever young person like herself with taste and manners and intelligence was only something to patronize. She was still absorbed in the complex problem when the visit came to an end.

An afternoon call—only that! And yet it had changed the world. Marie had read criticisms of the French social system with its striking inequalities, but such discussions had always seemed as remote and abstract as if they referred to conditions on Mars. Now, however, she had met an aristocrat and been snubbed. Now she knew what the protests were about. How unjust, how absurd that the mere accident of birth should determine a human being's position in life! What reward, then, was given to true merit? What use to study and achieve if a coarse and ignorant member of the *noblesse* could treat one as an inferior? Marie felt that the injustice struck deep into the very foundations on which France rested. What did religious teaching amount to, if people went right on with

such snobbishness? It was as unchristian as anything could possibly be.

During the next months, by reading, observing, and questioning her uncle, Abbé Bimont, Marie discovered that the same inequalities existed within the Church organization. All the high places were occupied by younger sons of the nobility. They wore the silk and lace. They drew the fat livings and privileges. It was the sons of the poor in their black cassocks who carried on the real work of teaching, visiting, comforting the sick and needy. In a burst of bitter protest all the religious emotionalism which had filled Marie's heart escaped like so much steam.

Strangely enough, it was no less a person than the son of Madame de Boismorel who helped this growth of critical skepticism. An intelligent, kindly, middle-aged man, he had come to see Marie's grandmother and had stayed to talk to Manon. The child's mind delighted him and he was soon conversing with her as he would with a person of his own age. As for Manon, she recognized instantly that here was a man who based his judgments not on conventional, but on real standards. Consequently she listened to him with sympathy and learned from him a great deal. "Reason before everything" was his motto. Science and philosophy were his gods. And Manon, borrowing his books, listening to his pronouncements, and regarding highly his degree of cultivation, began to follow in his mental footsteps. By the time she had finished the year and returned to her mother's

house her entire conception of the world had changed. That afternoon call and what followed in its train had rushed her into maturity. At thirteen years of age she had become an agnostic and a potential revolutionist.

Once such lines of development are laid down, every experience seems to make them broader and deeper. Externally Marie Philipon was the same loving, merry, active little creature she had always been. But within this familiar shell her mind was soaring to new heights and passing unwonted judgments on people and events. It was all very exciting. She could hardly understand how grownups could bear to waste so much time. For example, when she went with her mother to dine with the Abbé de Jay where Uncle Bimont now lived it was Manon who prowled eagerly about the library in search of new treasures of learning and it was her mother who made a fourth at the table to play the new dicing game of "trictrac."

One of the players was to prove only second to Madame de Boismorel in her ability to inspire Marie's hatred of the aristocracy. For this woman, whose speech was incorrect, who couldn't write a decent letter, who dressed like a frump, and had the grace of a giraffe—she was the descendant of an ancient house. Her name was Mademoiselle de Hanaches and never for one moment did she permit anybody to forget her superiority. It was a bitter pill for the child when after the death of the Abbé de Jay the noblewoman came to stay for eighteen months at the Philipons' apartment. How de-

testable it was to go about with her. For her ignorance of French grammar was made all the more noticeable by her overbearing manners. And the very worst of it was that her rudeness received the obsequious response of people taken in by her noble name. Because Mademoiselle de Hanaches went with Marie and her mother and the Abbé Bimont on a visit to Versailles, she was able to contribute her bit to an impression which set the seal and stamp upon Marie's revolt against the existing order.

They were all the invited guests of a young *abbé* at the court who was a great friend of Uncle Bimont and were to occupy at the palace the suite of rooms which the young man's absence on a mission had left at their disposal. His mother, who was to be their hostess, was one of the ladies in waiting to the widow of the late Dauphin. The party took a coach which brought them out from Paris along the Vaugirard road and they descended from it before the most elaborate palace the world had ever seen.

Now, of course, the vast stone edifice is a lifeless showplace, but Marie found it humming with endless activity. Couriers on prancing horses circled about the courtyard; soldiers in fine uniforms stood at the steps; ladies in huge hats with sweeping plumes and gentlemen in satin knee-breeches and velvet coats hurried up and down the great staircase. Within the corridor there were flunkeys at every turn and countless people passed to and fro.

This was all very magnificent. But little Mademoiselle Philipon's skeptical spirit was wide

awake. She found the sleeping quarters offered her party at the top of one of the towers extraordinarily cheap and mean. Moreover, although she had worn her very best clothes and had on the tip of her tongue ever so many gracious speeches and Latin quotations, nobody in all the gay crowds which thronged the superb reception rooms paid the slightest attention to her. Marie's sharpened consciousness found her mother pale and dowdy beside the rouged, beribboned court ladies. If anyone of their party was noticed it was Mademoiselle de Hanaches.

Watching her push in where the *bourgeoisie* feared to tread, Marie said scornfully to herself: "I suppose she thinks everybody can read on that grotesque face and hear in that uncouth voice the six hundred years of her proved nobility! What a place is this! Versailles is the center of the civilized world, yet here nobody counts except those who inherit titles and estates. I have as much philosophy, imagination and sentiment as any of these fine folk. But I am nothing and never can be anything amongst them."

Presently she took these bitter reflections out upon the wide terrace behind the palace. There her fury had to yield for a moment to appreciation of these stately vistas. Straight before her between tall groves and terraces which made a frame on either hand stretched a wide and turfy alleyway. Adorned with flower beds, statuary, and fountains, it sloped gradually down for nearly two miles to a series of shining lagoons in the distance. Nature

made decorous! A perfect pattern of formal beauty! Here was, indeed, a setting for human dignity and splendor. Marie did not know the cost in human suffering which the architect, Le Nôtre, had exacted to produce this triumph for Louis Fourteenth. She was lost in a vision of an exalted society to accord with such scenic beauty. The ancient Greeks would have achieved it! And with sudden passion she shouted within herself, "I wish I weren't French!"

Madame Philipon, who had joined her daughter, glanced with misgiving at that stormy little face. Incapable of flights either of imagination or rebellion, she had no idea what caused that angry look. "Aren't you enjoying this excursion, Manon?" she asked anxiously.

"Yes, provided it's over soon," was the radiant response. "A few days more and I'd detest these people so heartily that I wouldn't know what to do with my hatred!"

Her mother regarded her usually gentle child in amazement. "Why, what harm are they doing you?"

"That of making me feel injustice and, at every moment, some absurdity."

Even her mother was absurd to be so mild about things, reflected Marie rebelliously. There ought to be more protests against foolish conventions and empty standards. More ardently than ever after that visit she plunged into the critical philosophy of the day. When she wasn't conning the virulent satires of Voltaire she was dreaming of a new type of society with the gentle Rousseau. The only per-

son she knew with whom she could share her challenging ideas was her school friend, Sophie Cannet. And to her, now returned to her family in Amiens, Marie poured out her heart in a constant flood of letters.

A volume of these letters remains to us. They are reread in every generation by the historians and critics of this period and always with pleasure. Yes, this little girl of humdrum existence made of her dreams, her convictions, her emotions a text to delight the most exacting intelligence. Gay and somber, reflective, observing, always spirited, these letters with their charm of phrasing and vividness of expression contain the very beating heart of irrepressible youth.

One wonders what her mother thought of some of her ideas. For, according to the strict chaperonage of those days, Madame Philipon felt herself obliged to censor these epistles. But it was delicately done. Manon would leave her letter unsealed on the table and some time when she was not about Madame Philipon would cast her eye upon it. Then when they went out to walk they would post the letter in the box. Luckily for Marie, this postal system was in full swing about the time she was born. For until then it had been most expensive to get one's missives to their destination. Now there were letter boxes, postmen, and regular deliveries, and mail was carried punctually from one town to another on the coaches. The only difference between that system and the present one was that stamps did not exist. The receiver paid for the letter according to

PORTRAIT OF LITTLE "MANON"

weight. And one cannot help thinking that much of Sophie Cannet's pocket money must have been dedicated to her voluble Parisian correspondent.

These letters show plainly the contrast between Marie's inner adventures and the calm of her every-day life. But, as she herself said when years after she looked back upon these days, it was a happy life like "the most serene mornings of Spring." It flowed gently like the river of which she never tired. How she adored the excursions she took upon it with her parents down to Meudon on a shining Sunday!

Every Saturday night her teasing father would say, "Well, if it's fine where shall we go tomorrow?" And then he would propose one after another all the possibilities—the Bois de Boulogne for a glimpse of fine equipages, Saint-Cloud for its fountains, Bellevue for a look at the château of Madame de Pompadour. Yet all the time he was only waiting for his little daughter to burst out: "Ah, papa, if you'd only go to Meudon I should be happier!"

Walking between him and her mother, with a volume of Corneille or Rousseau in one hand, she loved every moment of it. At the Pont-Royal, still the loveliest old bridge in Paris, they would take passage on a little boat and drop swiftly down the river past Saint-Cloud and land at Meudon. All day they would wander in the fields and woods. While her parents rested under a tree Manon would read or fix her kindling glance on the great trees, the wild orchids, the birds, and an occasional deer which stole timidly to the edge of the wood.

Sometimes they would have a luncheon of omelette, vegetables, salad, and cheese at a little Swiss cottage. Occasionally they spent the night at a small inn near the village. Marie and her mother would sleep in a huge bed and her father in a smaller one in the corner. Once, with that antagonism for fresh night air which afflicts the race, Monsieur Philipon gave the bed curtains so violent a jerk as to bring down upon him the entire canopy of the four-poster. How they all laughed then! And how amazed was the mistress of the inn whom they summoned to the rescue.

Thus the years of girlhood slipped away. And now Marie's parents began to think of getting their daughter married. It was high time. Wasn't the Dauphin going to be married at sixteen to a girl only a few months older? Everywhere Manon went she heard of nothing else.

If she stepped in at the green grocer's, he would exclaim sentimentally: "Marie-Antoinette—a pretty name for a princess, isn't it!" If Manon ordered a cutlet from the butcher, he would burst into the same talk: "Too bad Prince Louis is going to marry an Austrian, in my opinion. But we are certainly going to give her a warm welcome. They're going to have fireworks on the Place Louis Quinze and the guns will fire a salute. Yes, it will be a big celebration." And after the great night was over the butcher and the grocer were wringing their hands in great distress over the bad augury which had occurred. For some of the fireworks were accidentally

discharged into the crowd and many people were killed and others injured.

Marie was curious about this princess from far away. When she next saw Uncle Bimont she asked him what his friend the *abbé* at Versailles said of Marie-Antoinette. "Oh, she's brought new youth to the palace without a doubt," her uncle returned. "They say she wants to dance all night and is keen about gambling. The prince hardly knows what to do about her. His tastes are so different, you know. When he's not hunting he likes to fool about with metals in the shop of an old ironmaster. He hates to dress up and go to balls."

"That's a fine pair of future rulers!" exclaimed Marie indignantly. "I should think they'd be studying everything which would prepare them for responsibility!"

Her uncle laughed. "Just as you are learning to sew a fine hem and make the soup in preparation to be somebody's accomplished wife, *hein?*"

Marie blushed and changed the subject. For, indeed, the question of matrimony was now uppermost in her life and on the whole it was rather a nuisance. Such people as her father considered! Yet the only one who had taken her fancy met with no parental approval. Because this young man had published a book or two he achieved in the eyes of Mademoiselle Philipon a distinction his personality didn't really possess. And yet it was a strange way to win a young heart. For the author's treatises were discussions for the benefit of parents of some of the pitfalls in the path of youth and were quite enough to shock

feminine sensibilities. It is an indication not so much of the taste of the times, which was depraved enough, but of her mental sophistication that La Blancherie's publications failed to shock Marie. Nothing true shocked her. She thought La Blancherie a most thoughtful young man and gave him all her smiles.

That was something to give! There's no doubt whatsoever that Mademoiselle Philipon had grown into a most attractive young woman. She was often enough called very beautiful by people who knew her later. But she could hardly have been that. She was short and rather stocky. Her nose turned up and was rather thick at the end and, indeed, no part of her face was of classic regularity. Its charm lay in its coloring and expressiveness. Lovely dark eyes under fine dark brows, thick chestnut hair full of lively lights and waves, beautiful skin with fresh color in cheeks and lips, and white teeth—such was the brilliance of tint which heightened her ever-changing vivacity of expression. It is a tribute to the fineness of her modeling and to her fluid grace of movement and gesture that no one ever thought of her as the dumpy little thing she might well have been. Her dignity did not depend upon inches nor her seductiveness upon classic lines.

One evening when Marie and her mother had returned from a visit to Grandmother Philipon, they found the head of the house sitting in a mood of profound thought. "I have news for you," he said, thrusting his thumbs into the armholes of his buff waistcoat. "The young La Blancherie was here

and he proposed, mademoiselle, for your hand." Marie started violently and turned away to hide her deep blush. "Unfortunately," went on her father, "he has no prospects, only ideas on the subject of ways and means which arrange themselves so well in young heads. I made him see how little practical they were. To tell you the truth I'd prefer a candidate who was less of a gentleman and who had forty thousand crowns upon him!"

Marie, deeply affected, didn't for an instant agree that this was the last word on the subject. Perhaps La Blancherie would make money. She wrote him a kind letter and managed to see him several times before he had to leave Paris. However, her heart was not fixed upon this young man. There was always the possibility that some one would turn up who was more eligible all round. Already there had been many proposals for her hand. One had come from Monsieur Mignard, the gallant teacher of the guitar, one from a widower, and three from jewelers who knew Monsieur Philipon. Several families who lived in the Cité had also urged the engraver on the Pont-Neuf to consider their sons in the light of candidates for the pretty little Manon's hand. Marie didn't even know the faces of most of her suitors.

Being a French girl, our heroine accepted all these attentions for exactly what they were worth. The custom of the country now as then is to consider marriage as a partnership to which each side contributes. The girl must have a dowry. The man must have either good prospects or an established

income. If love enters into the arrangement, so much the better. But the essential condition of marriage is that the future family shall be supported in comfort. Marie Philipon clearly realized that, as the only daughter of a most respectable mother and of a father well set up in business, she was judged likely to have a considerable dowry and to be a good match.

She took this system quite as much for granted as she did the tongue she spoke. But all the same she had no intention of yielding to it with passive completeness. She wanted her marriage to be something more than a union of incomes. She wanted to be something in life, to do something, and her lot, she felt, should be cast with a man who had achieved or would achieve some personal distinction. Monsieur Philipon, for his part, was seeking to invest in a son-in-law who would prove a good business proposition and therefore he looked most kindly upon several of his commercial associates.

Not so his daughter. "Don't talk to me about men in trade," she said haughtily. "They are always greedy and some of them are cheats. I'd rather live alone with my books of philosophy than marry a man who didn't respond to things as I do."

"But," urged her father, "some of these men of affairs are both well-educated and polite."

"Oh, they know a few phrases. They can make a bow. But their minds are on their strong boxes and that wouldn't help me bring up my children." When her father gruffly returned that she could do that herself, the girl went on: "That would be hard if

it weren't shared by the man who helped bring them into the world. The only happiness in marriage consists of a real unity of heart. Besides, I want a husband who is worth more than I am." But her father couldn't see the yearning in her heart and only thought his daughter was a flighty piece entirely lacking in common sense.

What a joy it was to talk these matters over with a sympathetic companion just then! Sophie Cannet with her mother and her brother Selincourt came up to visit their cousins, and Marie went about with them all quite frequently. But even such contacts made through her beloved friend flung her back upon the everlasting question of class distinctions. The Cannets, both in money and in social position, had every advantage over the Philipons. Consequently, the proud Manon was continually torn between resentment of the fact and the desire so to demonstrate gentility as to justify their tolerant acceptance of her. To feel inferior made Marie either deprecatory or defiant, and in any case self-conscious, and she hated it.

Yet before she had more than sampled this bitter flavor in her grownup relationship with Sophie, she was suddenly prevented from seeing anything more of her. Marie was stricken with smallpox. This dread disease claimed victims every year and its threat was never dissipated. Vaccination was just being introduced into Europe and so far only the most progressive people were ready to make use of the preventive. Most people were afraid to try it. And when you reflect that sewage was very imper-

fect in this era, that modern disinfectants did not exist, and that most people were quite ignorant of personal hygiene, it is no wonder that smallpox was an ever-present curse, likely to descend even upon the most fastidious and the most apparently protected.

Marie was very ill, indeed. But she suffered no dreadful aftermath. Her clever little doctor with whom she loved to flirt said to her when she grew better: "It was very astute of you, young lady, to choose this kind of smallpox. It is an Italian variety, known as Ravaglioni, and it will leave no scars on your pretty skin."

Her convalescence was made down in the country at the house of Monsieur and Madame Bernard. They spent part of their time on the estate of a big farmer for whom they used to work and lived there in the simple contentment of a Philemon and Baucis. Marie would have been blissfully happy with them if once more that horrid sense of class distinctions had not thrust itself upon her. For the Bernards insisted that their niece should pay her respects to the family who owned the estate and again the girl was treated to the patronage which left her pride so raw. Indeed, their dinner invitation to her and the Bernards turned out to be more insulting than utter neglect. For the guests were seated at the second table with the servants. Watching with satiric eye the airs of these folk who copied every affectation of their master and mistress, Marie wondered bitterly whether she was doomed for life to associations of so cheap and tawdry a nature. After this she

avoided all contact with the family. The only concession she made was to go over on Sunday afternoons for dancing on the green before the house—an occasion too tempting to be resisted.

After this experience the girl returned to Paris more determined than ever not to ally herself with any of the commonplace candidates for her hand presented by her father. In order to persuade her parents that she wasn't merely captious, however, she had to develop the most far-sighted arguments and she even offered to relieve her father of the burden of refusing the claimants. This task of "playing the papa," she thoroughly enjoyed and composed letters brimming with parental dignity.

One aspirant came very close to success. Dr. Gardanne was his name and he was a young provincial who had been formally presented to Monsieur and Madame Philipon by their sweet cousin, Madame Desportes. Not until after all the negotiations were well under way was Marie given an opportunity to meet her potential husband. This encounter took place on the neutral territory of the Luxembourg gardens under the eyes of Marie's mother and her cousin. What a picture they must have made! The young man in doctor's wig and black clothes, Marie in a hat brave with plumes and a frock of wine-toned silk with tight basque and trailing skirt. Their eyes meeting, for the first time, said, "So this is he!" "So this is she!"

A touch of romance was given by the approach of a sudden shower. They all had to run for refuge to the nearby apartment of a friend on the rue

Vaugirard. How thrilled the little hostess was! She passed bonbons and whispered excitedly while the young people sat stiffly on their gilded chairs and stole secret glances at each other. "I do like sweet things!" said the doctor taking a bonbon and darting a sly look at Manon. She thought this the word of a schoolboy and replied, "Of course, men are fond of sweetness because they have such need of its being shown them." Such worldly wisdom, offset by a girlish blush, delighted the young man.

Madame Philipon, who had thought everything very propitious, said to Marie when once more they were at home, "Well? What do you think of Dr. Gardanne as a husband?"

Manon tossed her hat upon a chair. "I don't know."

"But, darling, you must. Surely you can tell whether he inspires liking or repugnance."

"It might be either, in time."

"That doesn't help your father and me to answer the young man's honorable proposals. You've refused so many already. A young woman ought to marry. Don't let every opportunity slip by."

But Manon shrank from the vision of herself as a country doctor's wife. What color, what distinction would there be in that? Sparring for time, she said that inasmuch as she and her mother were going to the country for a fortnight she'd like to think the matter over until her return. This was arranged. But in the absence of his guardian angel Monsieur Philipon blundered. He made such searching inquiries about the young man in his own

home town that word of it got back to him. Dr. Gardanne was furious at such officiousness, refused to understand that the sturdy engraver was but fulfilling his conception of parental duty, and after a lively quarrel the young man took himself off—much to Madame Desportes' disgust.

Marie met the news with a shrug. Not only was she rather relieved than otherwise, but she had begun to sense behind the outer tranquillity of her home the presence of some tragic care which made her own fate of less consequence. Something was haunting her mother. What could it be? And hardly had she asked herself the question when disastrous knowledge rushed upon her.

Chapter Three

ONE reason why young hearts are so deeply stricken by sorrow and disappointment is because they miss the signs and portents of disaster. Older people, who are more observing, are forewarned. Madame Philipon had long been familiar with the situation of which Manon was just becoming aware.

For many years the girl absorbed in her studies and her emotions had given her parents that unquestioning affection which took for granted that all was well. She accepted without challenge her father's irregular hours, his long absences in the evening, even the increasing lack of money in the family. She failed to observe that a look of strained anxiety had become her mother's habitual expression and that her father's bluff manner had acquired a ring of insincerity. She was therefore totally unprepared for the revelation she received one evening.

The cousin, Madame Desportes, had invited Marie and her mother to attend at the house of her friend, Madame Lapine, one of those entertainments which went under the name of "concerts." Here gathered a motley collection of brokendown noblemen, pseudo-artists, foreigners, and professional men of small reputation. Marie was under no illusion concerning this society and thought it

thoroughly second rate. But she enjoyed the talk and music and really at nineteen one had to go somewhere. As she was dressing for the party, however, her mother came in to tell her that she could not go and that the *bonne*, Mignonne, would take her place.

Then as Manon questioned her in sharp disappointment, Madame Philipon with a strange look said, "The fewer questions you ask, my child, the happier you'll be. There are several reasons why I cannot go. Leave it at that."

This she was forced to do. But on her return at midnight Marie found these reasons impersonated in a familiar figure standing uncertainly before her at the door. He was trying all unsuccessfully to fit a key into the lock.

"*Voici*, monsieur, let me do it!" Mignonne quickly opened the door and vanished inside. Marie, her hand on the knob, stared upwards as her father lumbered slowly through the aperture.

Down the little hallway her mother came quickly, a candle in one hand. "Gatien! At last you come! Have you brought the money? I had to let the shop boys go unpaid and give excuses to Madame the proprietor who came for the rent. Gatien!"

He had without response lurched heavily into a chair with head fallen on his breast. For an instant Marie leaned shuddering and giddy against the door. Then with a great effort she came forward to her mother. Madame Philipon started in terror. She hadn't seen either her daughter or the maid come in. "Go to bed, child!" she said with trem-

bling lips. The tears were rolling down her cheeks.

"Not so *maman.* I know now. I shall help you get him to bed."

When this had been accomplished Marie drew her mother into her bedroom, placed her in an armchair and flung herself upon her knees beside it. In the relief of long pent-up misery Madame Philipon leaned upon her breast and the two women wept together. Finally the girl said, "What has father been doing, *maman?* You must tell me now."

In a broken voice the other told the sordid tale. It had all begun the year Monsieur Philipon had been doing community work. The honest, hard-working man had suddenly discovered how amusing it was to drop into a café, to drink and gossip with friends, to bet on cards and the lottery. Little by little these temptations had undermined his character until neither affection nor honor could make him resist them. His wife had remonstrated in vain. Lately she had known the final humiliation. Another woman in the Cité triumphantly rivaled her influence over Gatien Philipon.

Dreadful as this revelation was to the unsuspecting Marie, there was one still worse which that same ghastly evening she began to realize. This was the state of her mother's health. Worry and the effort to save the shop from ruin and manage her house at the same time had so taken her strength that when she finally broke down before Marie she never recovered her old spirit. Her physical weakness and her moral dependence upon her daughter increased month by month. And although she attempted con-

stantly to be cheerful and unconcerned, her deadly anxiety could not always be suppressed.

One day when the question of one of Marie's suitors came up Madame Philipon burst out suddenly, "Oh, how happy I should be could I only see you happily married before I leave this world!" Finding the girl's eyes fixed upon her in horrified question and filling with tears, she managed to smile and to add gently, "Of course, I was only speaking in general, darling. That's what every mother wants." But Marie's fears were not allayed.

In the midst of all these personal troubles there came an event of such national significance that, like all good Parisians, Marie Philipon could think of nothing else. For that deadly disease which once lightly flicked Marie had sought out the most august victim in France. The king was stricken with smallpox. Too much weakened by dissipation to rally, he sank gradually and steadily to his death. Once known as the "well-beloved," Louis Fifteenth had succeeded so well in making royalty contemptible to his subjects that he suffered a miserable and ignominious end. He was attended in his last hours only by his servants and was regretted by nobody in the palace or out of it.

Quite the contrary. One night Marie Philipon, startled by the sudden sound of bells chiming merrily, looked out the window to see bonfires lighted all along the *quais* as they were in times of great rejoicing. Taking Mignonne with her, she ran hastily down to the street to learn the news. "Has the

king recovered?" she asked an old market woman who stood at the edge of the crowd.

"No, thank God. He is dead," she croaked.

And just then a passing group of sailors and gamins began to shout: "*Le roi est mort! Vive le roi!* Long live Louis Sixteenth!"

Turning back to her doorway, Marie encountered a business associate of her father's. "Well, mademoiselle," he said with a wave of his hat, "this puts an end to the old régime. Perhaps we'll have a good king now. He must be called, 'Louis the much-desired.' "

As for that personage, he had been sitting with Marie-Antoinette in a little *salon* in the palace at Versailles when a courtier informed him of his grandfather's death. Looking at each other with awe-stricken eyes, the royal pair knelt down crying, "Oh, God, protect and guide us, we are too young to reign!"

His youth, however, endeared the new king to his people. The hopeful comment which was heard on the Pont-Neuf was typical of the feeling all over France. Marie was instantly prejudiced in his favor because almost his first royal act was to submit to vaccination against smallpox. "That will go far to influence people," she said to her mother. "If only medical science had its way we would soon be free of this awful plague."

From Uncle Bimont she received another favorable indication of better times. That little man was full of praise for Louis' ministerial appointments. "It's a wonderful thing to have Monsieur Turgot as

Comptroller-General," he said. Then at Marie's look of blank ignorance he went on, "Turgot is a great economist and reformer. He has been superintendent of the district of Limoges and there he so abolished abuses and regulated taxation that the province is rich and flourishing. He wants to make the same changes all over France. His idea is that to tax working people too much makes them discouraged and keeps them undernourished. Consequently the country remains poor. He wants to reduce the customs on everything shipped around the country and he's going to begin on grain. If it comes into Paris free, for instance, the price of bread will go down."

Unfortunately, however, the bakers did not respond to this change and refused to lower their prices. Marie saw pinched faces in the street that spring of 1775. Conditions did not improve. There was a great deal of unemployment and complaints were loud and bitter. Near the statue of Henri Quatre knots of people gathered daily to grumble and threaten. "The king could do something for us," they argued. "We ought to go to him with our protests."

One day in May Mignonne rushed in from doing an errand across the bridge. "There are riots going on," she screamed. "People are attacking the bakeries and snatching loaves from the shelves. The shop on the Place Dauphine has had all its windows smashed."

Marie and her mother, posted all day at the windows, watched the ragged crowds pushing this way and that, now scattered by a cavalcade of soldiers,

now forming again. In the evening Monsieur Philipon reported that couriers from Versailles had brought word of mobs surging around the palace to demand bread.

"And not in vain," commented the engraver. "His majesty ordered an issue of bread to be given out free and told the soldiers to arrest nobody."

Marie, who had been convinced that reforms were in progress, was deeply puzzled over the outbreak. She had never been hungry and cold and therefore her sympathy with the poor amounted to no more than a vague wish that the world might be ruled by justice and brotherly love. "It is strange," she wrote to Sophie Cannet, "that just as there seems more hope of redress the people should flame up about a matter that has long been a great difficulty."

She had no one to explain to her that all the evils from which everyone but the nobles had suffered during the last two reigns could not be cured in a few years. She did not know that Turgot was hated by Marie-Antoinette and the courtiers because he wished to cut down their expenditures; and feared by the other ministers because their only idea of statecraft was to please the monarch and increase his power. She did not even see what the success of the bread riots signified. With the government paying for damaged property, with only two among all the insurgents punished, and with the price of bread reduced, it was a signal triumph for the popular uprising. Wiseacres shook their heads and thought it a precedent which boded no good for the ruling powers.

That Marie Philipon thought no more just then about these national problems, however, is not to be wondered at. For that same month of May she experienced the first great grief of her life. And in spite of its many previous indications it came upon her as swiftly as an avalanche.

She had taken her mother on the holiday Feast of the Pentecost down to Meudon to get the sun and air. On their return Madame Philipon, who had stood the outing very well, urged her daughter to go to see Sister Agathe at the convent as she had promised. "I am feeling quite well, dear girl," she urged. "You know I don't mind staying alone. Take the *bonne* with you and be off. She would like to stroll in the Jardin du Roi on the way back."

Marie somehow did not wish to leave her mother, but was finally persuaded to do so. Once arrived at the convent, however, the most extraordinary sense of uneasiness came over her and she said to her astonished friend that she would have to return home at once. "But why?" urged Sister Agathe. "You have only just come and I see you so little. Is your mother ill?"

"No," replied Manon, "but I feel I must see her again at once." As she spoke a great sob arose in her throat. To the disgust of Mignonne who was counting on the promenade, the girl hurried home as fast as she could. Moment by moment her unreasoning fear grew greater. And when she reached her door, there like the embodiment of her premonition stood a young woman from the apartment above wringing her hands in despair.

"Oh, mademoiselle," she cried, "your mother has been taken very ill. She came and got my mother, but we don't know what to do."

Manon fled up the steps with pounding heart. In an armchair with the pitiful look of one suddenly stricken down lay her mother. At the sight of her beloved child she tried to speak, tried to lift her arms and to smile, but in vain. She was, as they afterwards discovered, paralyzed by the bursting of an abscess on the brain.

With feverish activity Manon sent the *bonne* for a doctor, the neighbors for her father. She got her mother upon a couch and made her as comfortable as possible. All the girl's motions were made almost mechanically. Her consciousness was absorbed in a black gulf of fear and woe.

Nor did the arrival of the doctor bring any reassurance. He could do very little. As for Monsieur Philipon, in the presence of this desolation he only stood pale and silent. At last the doctor whispered to him that he had better send for a priest to administer that last of the seven sacraments, extreme unction for the dying. Through her veil of pain Marie saw the priest enter and prepare for the solemn rites. Like an automaton she received from his hands the candle and stood there, a figure of stone. As the last words droned away, however, the statue suddenly crumpled to the floor and when poor little Manon came out of her faint she was told as gently as possible that her mother was dead.

Her suffering was too great for endurance. In

a half-conscious state she was taken by her great-uncle Bernard to his house and there she lay for a long time very ill. Even when she grew better it seemed as though she were surrounded by a wall of ice. She could not even weep. Nevertheless, little by little the youth in her veins warmed and strengthened her. At last, when a letter of tender sympathy arrived from Sophie Cannet, the ice wall dissolved in tears.

Everyone rallied around the stricken girl. Sister Agathe came frequently to see her. Sophie wrote nearly every day. Uncle Bimont who was now in the country with Mademoiselle de Hanaches as his housekeeper invited her down for a visit, and there Abbé Legrand from Versailles brought her comfort. With delicate tact he led her to talk to him about her mother and lured her back to something like her old mental activity by introducing her to *L'Héloïse* by Jean-Jacques Rousseau. The book impressed her as profoundly as Plutarch had impressed her ten years ago and after this she took up her studies once more. But although upon her return her father made an effort to be with her more and she went about again with her friends, Marie's sadness scarcely left her for a moment.

With wan interest, for it was only a month since her mother's death, Marie read the glowing descriptions of the great coronation of the king and queen. This took place, like all the other coronations since the time of Clovis, at the Cathedral of Rheims. For the passage of the royal coach, which had to be especially built to accommodate the lofty crown

Louis had chosen, the entire road from Paris to Rheims had to be remade. To accomplish this the court invoked the ancient law of the *corvée*, or tax on peasant labor. Thus summoned by their lords the peasants had to leave their crops and vines and go out on the road to break stone and pack dirt without one sou of payment. The *corvée* was one of the most exasperating of all the abuses in the kingdom, and Turgot was trying to get it abolished from the statutes.

Yet when the great day came these very peasants lined the road to cheer the king and queen as they passed. "He is young and good," they said to one another. "Without doubt he'll make things better for his poor subjects." And the gorgeously arrayed pair looked out of the coach windows, smiling and bowing with every appearance of being deeply moved by the popular demonstration of loyalty.

The same feeling animated Marie Philipon. Before the year was out she went again to Versailles and this time she was impressed very differently than before. "The young prince is docile and eager for good," she wrote Sophie Cannet, "the queen amiable and beneficent and the court kind and respectable —oh, but we are going to be happy!"

This comment showed that already she had somewhat recovered her normal interest in things outside herself. For personally she was far from happy. Her father soon reverted to his old ways and left her alone with the devoted maid, Mignonne. A letter to Sophie, dated Christmas day,

1776, at one o'clock in the morning, depicts her life with great vividness:

> Don't you find it strange that I always write you during the first hour of the twenty-four? I don't get up during this season until nine and I devote my entire morning to housekeeping. In the afternoon I sew and work at writing, verse, discourses—whatever pleases me. During the evening I read until supper time, but this is a very uncertain hour because it depends on the master's return. He is away all day, leaving me to attend to his affairs and usually returns about half past nine or ten. Since the supper is simple and conversation lacking we soon finish with the meal. Then I get out the cards and play *picquet* with my father. Of course, I try to get him to talk, but his replies are laconic. I labor, but in vain. At eleven o'clock my father goes to bed and I sit up two or three hours to write.

Another time she described going in to her father who had returned very late, indeed. "Father," she said, "I wish for you much happiness and satisfaction. I shall work for each so long as it is in my power to do so. But I ask of you the continuation of your tenderness which is dear to me and which I shall try to deserve." Can you hear beneath the stilted phrasing of the period the cry of a lonely and motherless girl who was trying to cope with the evil associations which possessed her only parent? All she received was an empty assurance delivered in a sweet-false tone which made her feel more desolate than ever. She wrote to Sophie that night, "I can forgive my father, but cannot any longer esteem him."

Marie was twenty-one when her mother died,

During the next half dozen years, uneventful, lonely, and restricted as they were, she gathered in a great deal of varied experience which was important to her mature development.

In the first place, her father's indifference permitted her an independence absolutely unheard of for a girl of her careful upbringing. Remember that no woman, especially a spinster, was supposed to go about unattended. Yet Marie often left Mignonne at home to tend the house and quite alone went wherever she pleased. She visited her cousin, Madame Trude, and her other cousin Madame Desportes. She went to Notre-Dame and the beautiful Sainte-Chapelle to hear the music. She walked over to Quinze-Vingt, the hospital for the blind, to hear a preacher who had become the popular idol and came away more convinced than ever that the Church was full of charlatans. She put on her oldest clothes and visited the poor to learn at first hand of what the depths of human misery might consist.

Of course, she did go to parties accompanied by her cousin. Her life was not quite so dull as she thought it in some moods. Indeed, she managed in her letters to Sophie to make these occasions sound quite glamorous. But for all that she could hardly suppress her constant pang that a better society was not hers by right. For example, she told with great spirit of meeting at one party a young Englishman whom she managed to interest by her intelligent praise of his country. It was evident he wished to see more of her. "Shall I see you at the house of

the Countess Beauharnais?" he asked eagerly. "No," said Manon, with a teasing smile. "Are you going to the ball tomorrow night?" "I'm afraid not." And then through her pretence of complete indifference she reveals herself in this comment to Sophie: "Politely and delicately snubbed, this 'my-lord' looked mortified. But how much more so would he have been had he known he was soliciting the favor of one who was very humbly the daughter of a small engraver."

Yet even her limited social experience taught her much. She learned how to talk to all sorts of people. She acquired a grace of manner which a fine lady might have envied. She practiced diction and the proper use of her voice until her way of speaking became one of her most charming and distinguished attributes. Moreover, as her power to attract increased so did her self-confidence and self-command.

Her cousin Trude was quite insane about her and she would have dismissed him from the house had she not yielded to the entreaties of his wife to bear with him. La Blancherie returned, also, and once more presented himself as a candidate for her hand. Judging by her sentimental effusions over him to Sophie, she might have taken him quite seriously had she not learned the damaging truth about him. A friend of Sophie's who came from the young man's birthplace told Marie that he was a professional fortune hunter, called by his townsfolk, "the sweetheart of a thousand maids." So bitter was Marie's humiliation to have wasted good sentiment

on one so worthless that she dismissed him herself with a vindictive interview.

After this appeared no other prospective husband of any consequence. So she learned to satisfy her emotional nature in friendship. Her heart could still skip a beat when a letter from Sophie was laid beside her place at the table. She enjoyed tremendously her occasional visits with the cultivated Monsieur de Boismorel. And the year after her mother died she made a new friend. What is more he was a friend of the Cannets, from whom he brought a letter of introduction to her.

Marie was reading in her "retreat" the afternoon of his first call. As soon as she had glanced over the letter he presented she made her toilette with the hurried care of an excited state of mind. But when she entered the *salon* to greet the visitor her heart sank in disappointment. Here was a man of twice her own age. His hair was thin and his complexion bilious. He was negligent in his dress. His manner was domineering. Surely not a personality to set any girl's heart aquiver! Yet Mademoiselle Philipon had not been conversing with him ten minutes before her first repulsion changed to positive liking. This man could talk. He knew something. His point of view was liberal, like her own.

He was one of the state inspectors of industries for the government. An ardent disciple of Turgot, he championed greater freedom for the development of manufacture and trade and the reduction of tariffs and restrictions. He had traveled and read and thought. He was preparing volumes on eco-

nomic problems for the great Encyclopedia which the French Academy was issuing. In short, here was a man of distinction, experience, and intellect. "Decidedly my superior!" thought Marie with joy. For she was so weary of inferior people. Even his name which indicated claim to nobility interested the girl. It was Jean-Marie Roland de la Platière.

For all these good reasons Marie warmed to this friend of her friends. And, although he showed all the capacity for airy humor of a page in geometry, she listened to his discourse with an attention so flattering, a response so intelligent that he could not help but be charmed. Whenever his duties brought him to Paris he would turn up at the little house on the Pont-Neuf. When he left Marie did not remember him as old and dyspeptic. She thought only of the sweetness of his rare smile and the inspiration of his ideas. She looked forward with pleasure to his visits as to feasts of wisdom.

Indeed, she heard with dismay the announcement he made one evening. The department was going to send him on an inspection tour in Italy which would keep him away for a long period. "I have come to ask you two favors, mademoiselle, before I say good-bye," he remarked, with his endearing smile. "First, I should like to present to you my best-loved brother who is a Benedictine monk and a prior at the Collège de Cluny."

Marie expressed her pleasure and inquired if the second favor were as easy to grant. She found it even more flattering. Monsieur asked her if she would be the guardian during his absence of all

his manuscripts. Not only was this trust in the nature of a great tribute, but as she slowly perused the papers in the next months, Marie felt that her appreciation of the author deepened more rapidly than it would have done in years of casual intercourse.

The last night of Roland's stay in Paris, Marie invited him to dinner together with an agreeable, elderly friend, Monsieur Saint-Lette, also a traveler and philosopher. The talk centered upon the one international topic of the day, the rebellion of the American colonies against England. Mention was made of the American diplomat who was making such a sensation in the capital. Whereupon, Marie said shyly that although the Quaker look of the American's dress was more pronounced, she thought his air of dignified and simple sincerity made Benjamin Franklin very like Monsieur Roland.

Her guest was deeply pleased. And well he might have been. Received at all the noted Parisian *salons* where his terse wisdom was much quoted, Franklin had aroused the utmost sympathy with his country. He had come to seek the open alliance of France which for a year had been given in secret to the colonies. And, although the government still hesitated to take a position equal to declaring war on England, everyone thought Franklin would ultimately succeed.

"Louis Sixteenth, for his part," said Roland, "naturally resents any rebellion against royalty and has no sympathy with an effort to establish a republic. If it weren't for a chance to pay back England for

her success in the Seven Years' War, he wouldn't even be tempted to help."

"True," said the other man. "Yet Louis cannot but be affected by the rising sentiment here in favor of the colonies. Look at the young Marquis de La Fayette! There's a scion of one of the most distinguished old families in France who is absolutely impassioned over this struggle for freedom. They say he means to organize a legion to go over and help."

Marie Philipon listened in a glow of sympathy. This was the kind of talk she craved. At the moment of her guests' departure, however, it took a more personal turn. As he took his leave of her, Monsieur de la Platière suddenly said: "Mademoiselle, will you permit me to kiss you good-bye?" Marie understood this request as a not unusual form of polite esteem. Yet she blushed furiously as she presented her cheek.

Watching her, Saint-Lette remarked slyly to Roland, "Happy as you are to go on your mission, you must hurry back for more of this."

The girl herself was surprised at the aching gap made in her life by the departure of her scholarly friend. If it hadn't been for Monsieur de Boismorel's attentive kindness she would have had no conversation worth mentioning. Often he invited her with her father for Sunday dinner at his house near Vincennes. There he would show her his library, lend her books, take her walks around the garden, and demonstrate plainly his enjoyment in

her society. Once he even said meaningly, "Alas! I could wish my son were a little older!"

True, this man had not the practical progressiveness of Roland, but at least through him Marie increased no little her store of culture. They worshiped Rousseau together. "Do you know what I did last year?" Marie confessed to him shyly. "I went all alone to the dingy little house where Jean-Jacques is living in retirement. I thought if I could only see him for a moment I should die happily. But they would not let me in." Shocked as he was by such unconventional conduct, de Boismorel could not help but be touched by the ardor of this young disciple. He took her out to Montmorency where Rousseau had lived and as they reclined under the great trees read to her Montesquieu's comment on her favorite author.

Another time he took his young protégée to a meeting of the French Academy. There Manon heard two distinguished poets, Delille and Laharpe, read verses which wrung tears from her eyes. There, also, she saw the famous philosopher d'Alembert who was collaborating with the far more famous philosopher Diderot in the tremendous summary of French intellectual life which the Academy was publishing volume by volume.

"I have heard a great deal about the Encyclopedia from a friend of mine who is writing for it," said Marie proudly. And a great wish filled her heart to see Monsieur Roland again.

He would have sympathized with the rage of de Boismorel against the people who wished to suppress

the great work. For every now and then Voltaire or some one else would write a chapter too unorthodox for the peace of mind of Catholic prelates. They would bring pressure to bear on the king's chief minister and get him to stop the publication. Then all the liberal thinkers of France would make an even louder protest and the volumes would reappear. It was a typical contest between progress and mediaevalism.

Mademoiselle was aware that she did well to cultivate such interests. For she was quite convinced by this time that hers was the doom so much dreaded by a French girl. She was to be an old maid—worse still, a penniless old maid. Yes, penniless. After her mother's death she discovered that Madame Philipon's suspicions had been well founded. Marie's gambling, dissolute father had spent almost all her dowry. And who would marry her without a marriage portion? Oh, of course, somebody like the butcher who actually had, much to her disgust, proposed for her hand. But nobody she would look at. She had taken some comfort in sharing the misery of her single state with her unwed friends in Amiens. But recently she learned that Henriette Cannet was considering marriage with the very person she had sent to Manon, Monsieur de la Platière. This news came as a blow to the girl. Not that she had ever considered him in that light for herself, but his marriage would prevent his ever seeing her again. True, he wrote to her quite faithfully. But they were impersonal letters full of philosophy and economics.

Most girls would have been in despair. But this one went right on enjoying whatever she could—a serenade heard under her window as she read *L'Héloïse*, a sunset, a new idea. Most diverting of all were the visits to her uncle at Vincennes. There they would read aloud the tragedies of Voltaire or give what she called "limping" concerts consisting of her violin, her uncle's flute and the lusty bass singing of a young canon.

Moreover, since she first met Roland she had found it very stimulating to follow national events. She rejoiced when France finally went into the war against England and enthusiastically cheered the troops who marched away to help General Washington. On the other hand, she was in despair when Turgot was finally ousted by his enemies.

"Who is this Necker who has been given charge of finances now?" she asked de Boismorel.

"A very successful Swiss banker with an excellent reputation," she was told. "His credit alone is worth everything to France."

And so it seemed. Necker floated many loans on the strength of it. But since he was able to do little to increase the national revenue or reduce taxation he accomplished nothing of fundamental value to the tangled situation. And so business was no better. Thoughtful people began to regard the king and his ministers as quite unequal to the vast problem before them. Ignorant people, on the other hand, were more apt to fix their angry suspicion upon the queen.

Marie Philipon heard a blast of such indignation

one night. She had dropped in at a neighbor's house for a little music and a game of cards. There she found a perfect orgy of gossip going on about Marie-Antoinette.

"Believe it or not," said one young man, "but the queen was at the public ball given at the opera last night. She was supposed to be in disguise, of course. But I recognized her plainly dancing with a young officer of the guards. I finally made the doorkeeper admit that it was she. She had driven in with the Princesse de Lamballes all the way from Versailles. Oh, she's a madcap!"

"Yes," agreed the hostess, "I've heard from one of the *valets de chambre* at the palace that Antoinette often stays at the gaming tables until morning and then sneaks in by a private entrance. Louis, snoring away after the hunt, never knows the difference."

When the ensuing roar of laughter died away another man spoke in quite a different tone. He had often been to Versailles in his capacity of cabinetmaker and had once received a word of commendation from the queen. "We should remember," said he, "that after all Her Majesty is a very young woman with a light heart. Certainly with her skating parties and sledging on the frozen lagoons, her balls and masques, she has made Versailles a far gayer place than it ever was. She's put her foot down on a lot of the tiresome old etiquette —and a good thing, too."

"Oh, but what an example of extravagance!" shrilled a little shopkeeper's wife. "Why, a friend

of my husband's who is a ladies' bootmaker tells me that the queen orders four pairs of shoes regularly every week. That's a nice thing when half the country is barefooted these days! Besides, I don't trust her. She's always intriguing—that Austrian!"

"Why doesn't she give the king an heir?" indignantly inquired an old woman sitting by the fireside. "She might do that much for France."

Manon was now called upon for an opinion. How different it sounded from the rough criticisms of these homely folk. "I think," she said, "that man was right who said, 'The court is the tomb of the nation.'"

The girl often recalled these diatribes when she went down into the country. The peasants looked to her half starved. From their eyes stared an expression of somber resentment or else a vacant hopelessness even more terrible. Wretched huts, underfed cattle, rusty and broken farm implements —no wonder it was hard to collect money in this country.

One day when she was on a visit to Soucis she was walking alone on a country road. A miserable little house stood in front of her and just as she reached it a young man in ragged coat came running around from the rear carrying three squawking chickens by their legs. As he reached the road, the door of the house flew open and an old woman began to scream after him with all her might. But when he went on his way without so much as a turn of the head, the woman flung her apron over her head and began to sob.

In great distress Marie went up to her and asked what was the matter. For a moment the crone stared at her sulkily. Then melted by the girl's sympathetic face, she groaned: "Our last three hens and all we have for eggs and my daughter sick and needing them so! But off they have to go to pay taxes to the *Seigneur* or we'll be driven from house and home. Oh, *mon Dieu!* How can we live now with no hens in the yard!"

Marie stared at her in consternation. She learned then that for this tiny hut and bit of land about it the peasants had to pay to the *Seigneur* three chickens and forty-two pounds of wheat a year besides other taxes. It left them practically nothing to sell in market to buy what they needed to keep body and soul together. Angry tears started to the girl's eyes. All she could do was to pour a few francs from her little purse into the amazed old creature's withered claw.

But Marie was too intelligent to derive much comfort from that gesture. Here was only one family among suffering thousands. After that she could never meet a handsome coach on the road or pass the gates of a magnificent estate without an inward protest against the injustice of such inequalities of fortune. Often when a gorgeous carriage drove slowly along she would catch a glimpse within of a fat abbot or a lord in silk and lace lolling on the cushions and she could hardly refrain from shaking an indignant fist at this representative of privilege.

After that one incident she understood a great

deal better the kind of reforms Monsieur Roland had advocated. There was a man who spent his life trying to establish greater justice on the earth! Marie had begun lately to think of him with peculiar intensity. She mentioned him in a letter to Sophie, hoping to hear whether or not Henriette's engagement to him was a fact. But Sophie vouchsafed no hint. She herself had not had a letter from the traveling philosopher in some time. Then suddenly he wrote. He was coming again to Paris. Marie's heart leaped for joy. There were so many things she wanted to ask him. It was good to think that after all their correspondence they would meet as old friends.

So they did. But Marie had once more to recover from a primary shock. He looked older, more unkempt and dyspeptic than ever. However, almost at once she began to feel all over again how this man's integrity and his idealism raised him above the common level. He was one in a thousand. Adroitly she endeavored to discover whether he was affianced to Mademoiselle Cannet, but in vain. Her friend would make no allusion to it. And before long, indeed, he was so frequently knocking at her door and escorting her out for promenades that it soon became very plain that whatever claim Henriette may once have had upon his interest had vanished before a more potent attraction.

Marie often lay awake at night trying to clarify her own feelings. For what could Roland's devotion mean except an ultimate proposal? Did she love this man? Not with the fervor she had

dreamed of feeling for the man she was to marry. Where she was ardent he was dry and cautious. He had no youth in his blood. Yet there was no one she trusted and admired so much. Besides, she wanted to marry. What kind of life would she have without such a tie? And this good and thoughtful servant of the state was probably the best match a poor, unprotected girl was ever likely to make. To share his work would give a meaning to her haphazard existence. At this point she would usually turn over restlessly and remind herself that whatever she thought of him it would be most unfair to marry him without a *dot.*

At last one day as he was about to take his leave of her Monsieur de la Platière gravely and with great sweetness asked if Mademoiselle Philipon would do him the signal honor of giving him her hand in marriage.

Marie's heart thrilled. The great moment had arrived. With trembling lips the girl thanked him. She was pleased that Roland had been sufficiently unconventional to speak to her, not through her father, but directly. She determined she would put his interest before her own.

"Before I answer," she said in a low voice, "I must frankly warn you against this marriage. I am not a good match for you to make. I have no *dot.* My father is practically ruined. I have my wardrobe and what I could save from the wreck, which is exactly five hundred pounds."

Probably if Roland had known this situation before he had returned to Paris, it would have made

him hesitate to cultivate Mademoiselle Philipon. But by this time he had come to depend for all pleasure in life upon this vivacious creature of the mature intellect, the eloquent dark eyes, and most fascinating voice he had ever heard. Touched by her candor, he would not be refused. "I love you, dear mademoiselle," he replied. "Money does not matter. I am a poor man myself. But since I have no worldly ambitions I have quite enough for us both. I beseech you to marry me."

He was generous and sincere. Lifelong association with such goodness was surely better than the ecstasy of which she had dreamed. For she was wise enough to know that ecstasy does not last. Into his outstretched hand she placed her small white fingers and she met his smile with hers. "Ah, you are a good man." To the daughter of Gatien Philipon this quality was more than great possessions.

Her quiet consent had made Roland so obviously happy that Marie caught the infection of it. They saw each other every day and every day the girl's tranquillity deepened. "I shall be able to make him happy," she said to herself. "A woman who marries undertakes the happiness of two people and in my devotion I shall be content." Her lover agreed, of course, to present his proposal to her father, but since he did not like Monsieur Philipon, he resolved to submit it by letter after his return to Amiens. It made her very sad and lonely to have him go, but she told herself it was not for long.

However, she had reckoned without her father. Some days later the maid came to her room to say

that the master of the house would like to see her in the *salon*. Knowing that he must have received her fiancé's letter she went with a secret excitement beneath her calm exterior. "He'll be happy enough to be rid of me," she thought.

The pompous coldness of her father's manner puzzled her. For a moment he stared before him. Then he burst out abruptly. "Well, I received Monsieur Roland de la Platière's proposal for your hand. You knew this was coming, of course? Well, I have answered it. I have refused him."

Marie sprang to her feet. "Father, you didn't! You couldn't have!"

"I most certainly did. The letter was dry and stiff. So is he. It is far from my wish to have a son-in-law who will always act as my critic."

"But, father, I consider myself engaged to him. He must have told you that. He must not be refused."

"He is refused and that's that. I don't like him."

Pale with fury, Marie stared at Gatien Philipon. That such a man, a man without honor, a man who had taken most of her dowry and made no provision for her future, should dare to impose his will in this way! To spoil the one marriage she had ever really wished to make! Every bit of fighting blood in this high-spirited girl rose into action. Once she might have submitted. But not now. She had lived too independently for that. Then and there she took an extraordinary resolution—one which not one French girl of that era in a thousand would have

dared take. She determined to defy her father. She decided to leave him.

The moment the decision was made she coolly announced it. "Father, your action in this matter leaves but one course open to me. I shall leave your house. I see that you care no more for my future than for my present and I shall endure it no longer. I shall go back to the convent of my school-days and take a room there." Her father, white and fuming, opened his mouth to speak, but with a commanding gesture of the hand she continued, "Of the money belonging to me I shall leave enough with you to settle any bills I may have incurred. From now on you need never hope to interfere with my life again." And with unhurried step she left the room.

After this scene she sat down and wrote to Roland. She told him that events had but too well justified her fears and advised him if he wished to save himself further annoyance to abandon all thought of marrying her. Then with feminine inconsistency she gave him her new address. In a few days she was settled with her books and belongings in a tiny room at the Convent of the Ladies of the Congregation.

It is evident from the tone of his letters that Roland was appalled at the unheard-of action of his spirited sweetheart. Liberal as he was theoretically, such unprecedented independence shocked and frightened him. Was this the sort of young woman a busy and studious man should take to wife? His obvious hesitation must have wounded the proud

girl deeply. Yet its ultimate result was to make him seem more desirable than ever before.

Her romantic imagination played about this drama of frustrated love. All the conventional elements were there, the wicked father, the beautiful heroine cast from the paternal mansion, the lover coming from afar to rescue her from distress. He simply had to be an impassioned lover. And Marie, although pretending to stick by her refusal, did all she could—and it was much—to make her middle-aged friend into just that. Undeniably pathetic, the desire in that young heart so starved for romance, to make her dream come true.

"Farewell, pride!" she wrote him. "Be thou man or illusion, I give myself up to the feelings you inspire in me that I foolishly believed I had repressed. Come! Be forever under the name of friend all that thou canst to the most tender and faithful heart."

But the inspector of industries had always put work before emotion. He could not leave Amiens to claim this willing bride. So Marie, who sometimes wondered if he would ever come, had to make what she could of her self-determined exile.

Her life during these long months was like the stillest of still pools. For economy she cooked her own frugal meals. Twice a week she went out, once to see her grandmother and the Bernards, once to look over the linen and give orders to the servant in her father's house. She read, she wrote, she reflected and received visits from the devoted Sister Sainte Agathe. Used to loneliness, Marie drew on her

inner resources and was usually content. But once in a burst of rebellion she wrote to Sophie: "Sometimes I am tempted to put on breeches and a hat to obtain freedom." Nor would it have been beyond her to do it. Hadn't she once dressed in the costume of a servant to accompany Madame Trude on a country jaunt and gone alone about the village with the utmost nonchalance?

However, Marie's impatience was not put to this test. Moved by so much renunciation for his sake and reassured by the comely quiet of her convent life, Roland wrote more warmly and at last announced that he was coming down to Paris and would see her. He rang the bell one winter day at the gate of the Dames de la Congrégation and when behind the grille he saw once more that ruddy chestnut hair, framing the vivid eyes and rose-fresh cheeks, when he heard his name spoken in the most delicious of voices there was not much hesitation left in Monsieur de la Platière. It was in January, 1780, when they met again at the convent gate. On February fourth of the same year Marie Philipon became Madame Roland.

It was a simple wedding held in the Church of Saint Barthélemy where Marie had first learned her catechism. Of course, dear uncle Bimont conducted the ceremony. The Bernards were there and Grandmother Philipon and Roland's brother, the friar. So, also, was one other guest to represent that tie which in one way or another was to last as long as Marie's life. He was Selincourt, brother of

Sophie and Henriette Cannet. Not a glamorous marriage, this. But Marie, meeting her husband's eyes as she turned from the altar, read in them something which might prove more enduring than romance.

Chapter Four

MONSIEUR and Madame Roland spent the first year of their marriage in Paris. For part of the time, at least, they had furnished rooms in the little Hôtel de Lyons on the rue Saint-Jacques. To Marie it was a difficult period of adjustment. For what vivid girl of twenty-six would find it easy to suit her pace and her responses to the demands of a sickly, middle-aged scholar? She was even handicapped by her admiration of him. Such learning and such experience made her half afraid to speak her mind. His frown was punishment. To win his praise she copied his manuscripts, corrected proof sheets and set his notes on Italy in order. To guard his health she cooked all his meals with her own hand.

Yet she took enormous satisfaction in this stretch of arduous dullness. It thrilled her to share in work so important as Roland's. She felt she was assisting him to prevent those conservatives who had caused Turgot's fall from completely stamping out progressive measures. Her sympathy poured out upon his plan of opposition to increased restrictions on manufactures. Moreover, her craving for intellectual food was satisfied in other ways. Her husband not only helped her in the study of Italian, but encouraged her to take botany courses at the Jardin des Plantes. He went himself when he could. For

like all the cultivated men of his day Roland was proud of the place held by France in scientific research. People attended lectures on these subjects with all the eagerness we nowadays have for the movies and many a man of leisure was a passionate amateur in botany or chemistry.

One such individual, met by the Rolands at the lecture course, was Louis Bosc d'Antic. In spite of being only twenty-one his work in botany and chemistry had already won him membership in the Academy of Sciences. The son of a Huguenot physician, he hadn't a penny. But his many distinguished connections made his friendship valuable to Roland. To Marie young Bosc was a godsend. It was delightful to have some one her own age dropping in for dinner. Besides, the strange mixture in him of happy-go-lucky man about town and earnestly liberal thinker made him a peculiarly sympathetic companion. From that time on Bosc became inextricably associated with their lives.

In general the Rolands went out little and entertained less. The one visit of consequence that year was received from Henriette Cannet. Her attitude was characteristically generous, for she assured Marie that Roland had shown excellent judgment in choosing between them. True, Roland's friar brother turned up and Marie frequently visited her grandmother, the Bernards, and Uncle Bimont. But new associations were few. Yet it never occurred to her to demand more and she was not surprised to hear that all the Cité was talking of the good match the little Philipon had made. Her one wish

was that the de la Platières might one day be as proud of her as she was of her husband.

In September they both went down to visit the family in the ancestral home at Villefranche, capital of Beaujolais. Madame de la Platière, long a widow, lived there with her eldest son, Dominique, now the head of the house and a canon of the Church. Marie's husband was the youngest and once had been the black sheep in the fold. For, refusing to enter the Church like the rest of the sons, he had fled from home in his nineteenth year. A relative who had a factory at Rouen had given him an opportunity to study business conditions from which he profited so well as finally to attract the attention of the government. The success of his public career had gradually won the tolerance of his family. But the stiff-necked canon still considered him incurably radical.

Marie almost understood why when she saw the de la Platière mansion on the Grande rue. Not only was it of vast size—the gardens, courts, and rambling additions covered an entire block—but it was ancient and historic. One stairway dated back to Henri Quatre's time. The fine, modern iron work recently added could not compete in interest with the rest. Nor could Jean-Marie with his negligent dress and his modern ideas represent the dignity of his lineage so effectively as his formal elder brother.

Yet Canon Dominique, for all the decency of his welcome, proved unsympathetic to Marie. At first she liked the gay, tempery Madame de la Platière far better. The lively old lady loved company and

often took Marie into Lyons to meet her friends and attend the opera. The young Parisienne was impressed by the grim city with its two rivers and towering hills and flung herself with spirit into all the contacts it provided. Indeed, she ended her two months' visit feeling that everything had been most propitious.

Only a brief sojourn in Paris followed this autumnal excursion. First, Madame Roland went to Dieppe to arrange for the publication of the Italian notes and soon after this Roland was recalled to Amiens. There they installed themselves in a little house. And there on October 4, 1781, Marie-Eudora Roland was born.

Madame Roland was so blissfully happy to have a child that she quite refused to regret not bearing a son. Well she knew, however, that the de la Platières had counted on a boy to hand on the name and inheritance. Therefore, the moment she could hold a quill she wrote Canon Dominique: "Well, well, my dear brother, it is only a girl and I make you my very humble excuses. Also, I promise you that this little niece will love you so much that you will pardon her for putting her nose into a world where she has no business to enter." But the moment the letter was sealed the tiny Eudora was cuddled close and told she was the sweetest and most welcome baby on earth.

Eudora's reply was a wail. That was her answer to everything. Contrary to the usual custom and at grave risk to her own health, Madame Roland nursed the ailing baby herself. Then at the weaning

period began a heroic struggle to find the right diet for her. There is no doubt that only her mother's untiring devotion saved Eudora's life.

It was Roland who was neglected these days. He got but intermittent assistance the first eighteen months at Amiens. When he went off to Paris on business the woman who used to write him discourses on democracy sent only telegraphic messages to report how much the baby had slept and exactly the state of her diminutive intestinal tract. Fortunately, the busy mother was now assisted by a new nurse, Marguerite Fleury, whose devotion, equally divided between mother and child, was to last a lifetime.

No wonder Madame Roland achieved but occasional glimpses of the Cannets! Besides, Sophie herself married the Chevalier de Gomicourt in 1782 and the next year Henriette became the wife of Monsieur Vouglans, a man much older than herself who left her a childless widow in eight years' time. Moreover, Roland was inclined to be jealous, at first, of Marie's independent interests. Consequently, except for the Mesmerism Club and an occasional evening at the local opera, Marie's diversions were confined to exchanging dinners with her husband's business associates and their wives. Nevertheless, Amiens gave her another of those friends whose destiny was thereafter to be bound up with her own. This was François Lanthenas, a young medical student whom Roland had met in Italy and liked so much that he now invited him to become a member of the household.

Marie grew fond of the charming and intelligent young man, profited by his assistance with her botany studies and found his stimulating effect upon Roland a great boon. Once more the talk widened from statistics and domestic details to the scope of national events. Endlessly the three discussed the resignation of the financier, Necker. Recently he had played a great card by publishing all the vast expenditures of the court. Until they read that document people had never known just how much the royal household cost the nation and horrified protest followed. Lanthenas said the *bourgeoisie* of France should adopt the American slogan, "No taxation without representation," and the idea thrilled Marie.

When at last "the little brother" went off to Paris to continue his medical studies the Rolands gave him a letter to their friend, Monsieur Bosc d'Antic. And that same year, 1784, Marie cemented the friendship between the two young men by her own long sojourn at the capital. The trip was undertaken to further the de la Platières' plan to ask the court to give the family a *Seigneurie*—a status equivalent to a minor nobility which would increase their economic security. It was a perfectly natural ambition at that time even for people of liberal persuasion. Marie was delighted to help. And, since Roland couldn't abandon his work, she had a good excuse to leave the baby with the cook, take Marguerite Fleury and skip off to Paris for a holiday.

But the expedition was by no means entirely a lark. In the first place, sad news awaited her. Louis Bosc was plunged in gloom over the fatal illness of

his father and she herself had to learn through her faithful friend, Sister Agathe, that dear old Grandmother Philipon had just died. Aunt and Uncle Bernard, however, were very much alive. So was Uncle Bimont. Marie ran out to see him at Vincennes.

"Tell me," she asked him, "do you think my father will come to see me? He knows I am in Paris, for I met one of his shop boys on the *quai*."

But the *abbé* replied that Monsieur Philipon's hostility to her marriage had been rather intensified than diminished by his own increasing poverty. Whereupon Marie determined to ask her husband to send a small pension to the unworthy old sinner.

In addition to these personal reasons for depression, Marie soon realized that her mission was doomed from the start. To accomplish it required more court influence than could be gathered in from all the relatives and friends the family possessed. It all hung on Calonne, the newly appointed minister of finance, and Marie couldn't get near him. He was already intrenched in the exclusive circles surrounding the queen. The favorites were highly amused because the king had agreed to pay his debts when he took office and by the minister's airy declaration that only the tangle in his own affairs had made him attempt to unravel the affairs of France. Everybody was agog over the huge and historic mansion he had taken on the rue Neufs-des-Petits-Champs which he was making one of the marvels of Paris.

One day when she had snatched time to show the

homesick Fleury some of the sights, Madame Roland passed this house. The gates were open and they could see workmen in the great, circular courtyard. "Oh, look at that beautiful palace!" exclaimed the maid. "What would it be like to live there?" No flash of clairvoyance told Marie that one day she was to know. She passed on absorbed in the problem of how to interview the owner.

She went out to Versailles for the purpose and sat for days among the other nobodies in the antechamber. She had a friend who had a friend who might pass her on to the person higher up. But the process never even got started. Meanwhile Madame Roland managed to insert a few diversions typical of Paris visitors at any age. She bought a hat. She shopped with Fleury for Eudora. She went to the opera and had the luck to see one of the first performances of that significant satire, *Le Mariage de Figaro*. She heard that its author, Beaumarchais, said of the furore it aroused, "There's something madder than my piece and that is its success." Furthermore, she often dined and walked with Lanthenas and, when he had somewhat recovered from his grief, Louis Bosc joined them for excursions in the Bois.

He and Marie initiated a little joke about Eudora which lasted many years and at last turned bitter. This was that Bosc should marry her when she grew up. "Since you cannot make love to the mother, you must wait for the daughter," said Marie with gay teasing.

At last in May, on the advice of everybody, Marie gave up the project of the *Seigneurie* as a bad job.

But at the same moment she learned that a different kind of plum might be borne away from Paris. The lucrative and responsible post of inspector of industries at Lyons suddenly became vacant and naturally Roland preferred it to the place he held. Probably he never could have obtained it for himself. For the gruff old head Intendant, empowered to make appointments, cherished a dislike for Roland. Marie, however, managed so to charm the old bear as to secure not only the coveted position, but a most remarkable testimonial. "I should like to help you in all your ambitions, dear madame," said old Tolozan. "This is not a compliment to a woman, but a tribute I love to pay to your sweetness and honesty." It convinced her that she had a gift for affairs.

Thus the trip to Paris had proved worth while, after all. Roland came down from Amiens to fetch her, and Bosc traveled with them part of the way. The journey began gaily. But in Louis Bosc lurked a suppressed emotionalism which subjected him to strange moods. He staged en route a hectic scene, left his friends in anger and tears and did not "make up" until he had received from Marie many letters too full of generous understanding not to triumph.

The year of 1784 was made still more momentous for Madame Roland by a trip to England with her husband. What a journey it was! By *diligence* to the Channel, over that by sailboat, and then up to London by stagecoach! But her keen interest never flagged. The impressions she set down for Eudora's future benefit make excellent reading today. She

enjoyed the differences between British and French customs. She was thrilled by the self-respecting freedom of English institutions. Those scientific men she met through Roland's connection with the Royal Academy and people like Mrs. Macauley, an historian famous in her day, gave her a new sense of truly civilized society. Later she wrote to Bosc: "You may rest assured that whoever does not entertain esteem for the English and a tender interest mingled with admiration for their women is either a coward or a crank or an ignorant fool who doesn't know what he is talking about." The visit made this champion of liberty long anew for a liberalized France.

However, her immediate task was entirely domestic. Since Roland's appointment came through, the household moved from Amiens to the family homestead in Villefranche. From there they went out at once to Le Clos, the country house which stood in the midst of the de la Platière vineyards. For now it was October and vintage time.

Situated at the end of a village street, enclosed by extremely high yellow walls, Le Clos, still owned by Madame Roland's descendants, was even then a century old. On one side of it were the low farm buildings and on the other an English garden with box hedges and flowers. From the lane outside the walls one can see the hills and valleys of Beaujolais —the austere charm of this wine country dominated on clear days by the white radiance of Mont Blanc. In spite of its drawing rooms and bedrooms, the house was not so much a residence as a workshop

equipped with cellars, great kitchens, and the wine presses.

This simplicity was a delightful contrast to Villefranche. There old Madame de la Platière was crouched like a jealous dragon guarding her rights against the daughter-in-law. There the masterful Dominique was continually on the verge of dispute with the opinionated Jean-Marie. Furthermore, the ensuing welcome into provincial society proved fatally tiresome. Marie wrote to Bosc that with the entire town calling upon her she could get nothing done. "Here," she commented, "the smallest *bourgeois* house gives more sumptuous repasts than the richest households of Amiens. Ugly quarters, delicate table, elegant toilettes, continual gambling for high stakes—such is the tone of the town in which the roofs are flat and the little streets serve as sewers."

Indeed, life at Villefranche indicates that the curse of "Main street" is potent in any country and at any era. The gossip, the snobbery, the petty cliques, the narrowness of people who read only libertine novels and never traveled—all this repelled the Rolands profoundly. In return, they were thought at once intellectual snobs and unholy radicals. Upon a flimsy excuse they were almost ostracized by the townsfolk. Some one circulated about Villefranche a witty and biting satire of one of the local balls. Absolutely without basis, its authorship was attributed to the newcomers and they were persecuted with lampoons and indignant letters.

Between the town and the family, between nurs-

LE CLOS, COUNTRY HOUSE OF DE LA PLATIERE FAMILY NEAR VILLEFRANCHE IN BEAUJOLAIS

ing her ailing husband and helping with his dry reports, Marie found these years replete rather with discipline than with pleasure. Yet she continued to lavish upon Jean-Marie the generosity and love which gushed from her being. Letters addressed to him when he was off on inspection tours are full of fervencies such as this: "I kiss your letter. You have touched it—this page where your heart is painted."

Fortunately Roland was elected to the Academy of Lyons. That honor entailed his establishing an official residence there and he and his wife took a small apartment in a fashionable section. Although the city was a stronghold of conservative aristocrats, it even then gave promise of what it is today—the great national center of the silk industry. Consequently it attracted many rich and powerful *bourgeois* and among them were cultivated people devoted to liberal ideas. Lyons always meant good talk and an occasional round of balls and parties.

Le Clos, on the other hand, meant the novel life of a country châtelaine. How Marie loved it there! She adored giving advice and aid to the country people. "The apothecary of the region," her husband called her. She immensely enjoyed that annual festival called a "Vogue" when she cut the huge *brioche* in symbol of hospitality for the countryfolk who came pouring in for miles around. Then they feasted, made music, and danced upon the green. Marie never tired of the views, the walks, the long striped roses called "roses panachies." She even loved the homely tasks. "We are making *confitures*," she wrote to Bosc one autumn. "We are

cooking wine, putting up quantities of pears and making bonbons and you are not here to taste them!"

Eudora grew like a weed between these honey-colored walls. And yet her lack of interest in learning anything was a constant grief to her ambitious mother. In despair the latter consulted the one authority who offered counsel about bringing up children, Jean-Jacques Rousseau. Madame Roland made experiments in teaching her child quite in the spirit of the most modern parent. Fortunately, however, Rousseau's sentimentality was offset not only by her own firmness, but by a sense of humor. Writing to Bosc about his future fiancée, Marie told him Eudora had just been heard to utter a mighty oath and had confessed she'd learned it from the servants. "Imagine such precocity!" commented the mother gaily. "She isn't with them one hour in fifteen days!"

Madame Roland now began to hear from Paris with keen interest that Calonne's extravagant methods had produced an era of mad spending. The king had bought new hunting territories. The queen had been given Le Petit Trianon, a chalet at Versailles, where she played at being a shepherdess. Then came the great scandal of the diamond necklace and shortly afterwards a general crash. When Calonne announced that it would take one hundred and twenty millions to pay the nation's debts Louis Sixteenth was forced to summon the Notables. That body, which had not met for a hundred sixty years, was supposed to represent the nation. But, since the king himself appointed its 144 members, he natu-

rally selected almost all of them from the nobles and exalted clergy. Consequently the hope of getting unfair privileges abolished was not great.

However, out of these terrible evils one good resulted. This was the growing freedom of outspoken criticism from intelligent Frenchmen. One day Roland came to the family dinner table at Villefranche with a letter in his hand. "Here's a man," said he, "who dares to publish the truth. I have just heard from a person named Jacques-Pierre Brissot. Together with another writer, he has issued a book called, *The Importance of the American Revolution to the Good of France.* Brissot writes me that in it he has often praised my efforts for economic progress and liberty."

"Ah?" Canon Dominique helped himself to rabbit-pie with a lordly air. "One of those radical upstarts, I suppose, this Brissot! Praise from him is praise, indeed."

With an indignant glance at the speaker, Marie said to her husband, "I hope Monsieur Brissot sends the book. It is just what the country needs." Thus did these two first establish contact with a man who was later to have a tremendous influence upon their mutual fate.

Soon afterwards they heard of him again. This was in Switzerland where the Rolands traveled quite extensively in the year 1787. It was Gosse, the botanist and savant of Geneva, who said Brissot's book showed how wide had been the influence of French soldiers returned from fighting in republican America.

"Such influence is good," said Gosse. "But remember that France has far more ignorant folk than have the American colonies and it has been more bitterly oppressed. Therein lies the danger. A revolt in France would unloose awful violence."

"Perhaps," returned Roland. "But we are beginning to despair of peaceful methods. Turgot tried them and he was dismissed. Necker could achieve nothing. Now the Notables are meeting and you'll see them absolutely refuse to force the aristocrats and clergy to pay their share of taxes. The upper orders will never willingly give up a single privilege."

The prediction came true. And yet the Notables opened wide the door to the onrush of sweeping changes. For they declared the provincial assemblies should at last include representatives of the *bourgeoisie*. And they went further. They told the king that the way to redistribute taxation was through laws which only the States-General had the power to pass and they begged him to convoke it.

The States-General had not met for one hundred seventy-five years. But its traditional prestige was enormous. In the first place, it was made up of the Third Estate as well as of nobles and clergy. In the second place, its members were not appointed by the king, but chosen either by provincial assemblies or by direct election. Thus it really represented all the people of France except the peasants and workingmen.

The bare possibility that the king would summon the States-General thrilled every liberal Frenchman.

Madame Roland learned from Bosc and Lanthenas that excitement in Paris was running high. Calonne had been replaced as chief minister by Archbishop de Brienne, and the latter was supporting Louis in a death struggle with the Parliament of Paris. The people cheered every effort to oppose royal coercion. They paraded in the streets carrying caricatures of the queen, named "Madame Deficit," and shouted that it was not the banished Calonne, but the court who caused their miseries. At last, the king flung two Parliamentarians into prison and banished first the Duc d'Orléans, then the Parliament itself. But still that body refused to sanction the vast loans demanded. They declared, as had the Notables, that only the States-General had the right to change taxation. Moreover, the same answer came from the Ecclesiastical Assembly when the king asked them for money.

"Surely Louis will call the States-General now!" cried the liberals. But, instead, the monarch tried to bully the country. He passed edicts which greatly reduced the power of local assemblies and listened to none of the infuriated protests which resulted. Riots, imprisonments, and local struggles between liberal and royalist groups went on during most of 1788. But at last, in August, facing general confusion and an empty treasury, the king yielded. He issued the proclamation which was to change the history of France. He convoked the States-General for May, 1789. Tremendous rejoicings followed. Then came another sensation. On the twenty-fifth

of August, to the sound of national thanksgivings, Necker was recalled to office.

Fascinated as they were by these swift and tremendous happenings, Monsieur and Madame Roland were not yet shaken out of their domestic rut. Indeed, Roland had practically withdrawn from public life. For, learning that the minister-in-chief was about to remove all local inspectors of industry, he retired to Le Clos to tend his vines and complete his technical books. These were now proving an excellent supplement to the income settled on him by his family. As for Marie, she had become a local celebrity because a friend in Lyons had published her notes on Switzerland.

The winter of 1788-1789 began with unprecedented cold and suffering throughout France. Crops had been poor and commerce was paralyzed by general unrest. Paris was filled with peasants and derelicts driven in by sheer starvation and the toll of lives was terrific. Madame Roland learned that one of the many victims of bronchial pneumonia in the capital was her father. He died without leaving any message to soften her memory of him. She was far more grief-stricken the next year by the sudden death, first of Roland's beloved brother in Longpoint and then by her own uncle Bimont.

Early in the new year were published the regulations for elections to the States-General. Their extreme liberality split France into two camps of fury and rejoicing. Any man was allowed to vote if he could prove his French nationality and had his name previously on the tax record. Furthermore, twice

the number of the *bourgeoisie* as compared with the number of clergy or nobles was to be chosen. This made the Third Estate equal in power to the combined upper orders.

"It is unheard of!" shouted Canon Dominique. "Six hundred *bourgeois* to three hundred each of the aristocrats and clergy! Are we to be governed by the riffraff?"

"The measure is just," retorted Jean-Marie. "It is time the commercial and professional classes had something to say! Where have the nobles brought the country except to the brink of ruin?"

He and Marie were glad to get down to Lyons in February. There they placed Eudora as a boarding pupil with their friend the Oxford scholar, Benjamin Frossar. Between sessions of work on the volumes for the Encyclopedia, they flung themselves into liberal alliances. One of these resulted in a relation which was to stand every terrific test. This friend was a barrister of excellent reputation and great personal charm who possessed five children and the magnificent name of Luc-Antoine-Dontin de Rosière-Champagneux.

Champagneux had a project to found a liberal paper at Lyons which Madame Roland eagerly championed. That was the kind of thing needed. Brissot had just begun publishing one in Paris called *The French Patriot* and both "the little brother" and Louis Bosc were associated with him. So, also, was a young notary from Clermont-Ferrand, Bancal des Issarts, of whom the others wrote often. To spread ideas on free government was far more important, in

Marie's opinion, than the sudden effort stimulated by the Duc d'Orléans to organize philanthropic societies.

"The duke," she said to Champagneux, "is like the other aristocrats who give largess with one hand and push the people down with the other. A cousin of the king, a man enormously rich—how can anybody trust him?" Nor was she influenced by the fact that Orléans, recently in the king's black books for liberalism, had opened his domain, the Palais-Royal, to the public, had put up shops around the garden, and made the place the great rendezvous for all the radicals of Paris.

No, Madame Roland refused to trust aristocrats. What did stir her was the tide of free discussion sweeping the land with a flood of pamphlets. The most famous of these, written by the Abbé de Sieyès, and entitled *What is the Third Estate?* was sold to the tune of thirty thousand copies. And the stronger grew this new spirit among the *bourgeoisie*, the more violent became the resistance of the nobles. They fought to keep the commoners out of local assemblies. They refused to nominate from their own orders men of liberal ideas. Of course, men like La Fayette and the Duc de Liancourt carried their orders in certain sections. But the gifted orator and writer, the Comte de Mirabeau, had to join the Third Estate. The same conflict is revealed in the memoranda prepared for the king on the new legislation wanted by the three orders. The upper two wanted no change involving their privileges.

The Third Estate challenged almost every existing law and custom.

One evening when the Rolands were dining with Monsieur and Madame Champagneux, Marie told them an aristocrat had called these memoranda revolutionary. Her host set down his wine glass with a thoughtful stare. "How so? It was not revolution the last time the States-General assembled."

"No, my friend," replied Roland, "but then affairs were at no such pass as this."

"Let us not be afraid of the word!" cried Marie with spirit. "If it is revolutionary to cure a deadly malady and work for human justice, then I, for one, am a revolutionist!"

In these words Marie revealed that the emotional undercurrent of a lifetime was rising to the surface. Yet she was still a woman for whom her home came first and the country second. And thus, much as she longed to stay in Lyons to share the post-election excitement, she went dutifully off the last of April with Fleury and Eudora for Le Clos.

The villagers plied her with eager questions. But to her disappointment they had followed the example of most peasants and workingmen in France and had not gone to the polls. They had felt too ignorant and timid to try voting. None the less they were conscious that a great change in their destinies might be drawing nigh and hope lighted their eyes. The terrible winter was over. Spring was here. Already the wet fields gleamed with fresh promise of fertility.

Madame Roland felt in her own heart the great

hush of expectancy which had fallen over France. The voice of the people was about to be heard. A new world was at hand where justice and liberty would triumph. In spirit she was at Versailles to watch the pageant of the three orders escort the king to the Church of Saint Louis.

It was the fourth of May. Splattered by fitful sunshine, the silks, waving plumes, and gleaming swords worn by the marching nobles matched in splendor the red, purple, and gold vestments of the lordly ecclesiastical deputies. Deliberate panoply of wealth and power! What contrast to the black cassocks of country priests and the plain, dark stuffs worn at royal command by the *bourgeoisie*. Yet to the mob crowding the streets from end to end this drab contingent was clothed in radiance. They let the bishops and the lords flaunt by in silence. The royal coach was greeted only by huzzas for Necker. But when the people's delegates passed, those homespun men who bore on their shoulders the hope of unheard millions, then came a deafening, heartwarming roar. Cheers upon cheers for the Third Estate!

To win recognition from other sources, however, was another matter. According to the news sent from Paris the people's deputies had been received coolly by the king and were the only ones not assigned seats in the Assembly Hall. Furthermore, they had no room in the palace where they might retire between sessions. Worse still was the subsequent delay in settling the three initial questions to be decided. First, the powers of the deputies

had to be verified; second, it had to be settled whether the three orders would vote separately or together, and finally, if the method of voting should be by orders or by individuals. Neither the king nor Necker would make a decision on these matters and weeks dragged by with no accomplishment. At last, the Third Estate, left to themselves in the great hall, resolved to begin the work of outlining reforms.

In the midst of her burning indignation over this belittling of the people's delegates, Madame Roland received a summons to repair immediately to Lyons. Roland was very ill. For weeks she nursed him night and day. It often seemed to her that her struggle for her husband's life ran curiously parallel to the struggle of the Third Estate. His fever lessened on the seventeenth of June—the very day when the people's delegates voted amid wild excitement to adopt the simple and superb title of "The National Assembly." At once, they invited the other orders to join them in a common work and gradually the more liberal members filtered in. The new body elected the astronomer, Jean-Sylvain Bailly, its president and proceeded boldly to vote the collection of taxes.

Monsieur Frossar, Eudora's tutor, came one day to inquire for his sick friend and remained to chat with Marie. "Do you think," she asked eagerly, "that the king will acknowledge the National Assembly as a legal body?"

"Ah!" he cried. "Have you not heard? On the twentieth of June the deputies found the hall closed

against them. They all rushed to the tennis court and took an oath never to separate, but to meet wherever necessary and whenever required until the Constitution of the kingdom should be firmly established. Oh, it was a glorious scene! Nobles, commoners, and prelates embraced each other with tears! Louis will never break their spirit after this."

Watching the radiance of Madame Roland's face, Frossar went away marveling that a woman who had been serving as nurse both night and day until dark rings lay under her lovely eyes could still keep so passionate an interest in national affairs.

A few days later Roland had passed the crisis. So had the National Assembly. For though blundering Louis resolved at last to listen to the nobles and sent a messenger to tell the National Assembly to disband, it was in vain. For up rose that mighty orator, Mirabeau, and shouted his famous retort: "We are here by the will of the people and we shall not budge save at the point of the bayonet." The words went ringing down the land. The king withdrew his command and on the twenty-seventh of June all three orders met together once again.

And yet Louis summoned troops to Versailles. The act aroused alarm, but there was worse to come. On the eleventh of July Necker was dismissed in secret. Only by degrees next day did the news seep through Paris. It was Sunday. As usual all the radicals were promenading in the gardens of the Palais-Royal when outside along the rue Saint-Honoré a murmur came floating. Soon it became an angry growl which passed from one group to an-

other. Suddenly into the gardens a man hurried with the tale. "The king has betrayed us!" he cried. "Necker is dismissed!" From the galleries crowds came pouring out to hear and repeat the bitter word. It was the climax of all the opposition the king had offered liberalism. Fear and consternation were stamped on every face.

Not fright, but fury, however, seized one young radical. It was Camille Desmoulins, a notary and journalist. Leaping upon a chair before the Café Rotonde, he flung his rage at the crowd. "To arms! Necker's dismissal means a Saint-Bartholomew among the patriots! Foreign armies will soon be at our throats! *Aux armes! Aux armes!*" Every voice took up the cry. The frenzy spread. Before nightfall Paris was in revolt.

A few days after this Marie Roland, waiting for the Paris mail, had just stepped into the *salon* when suddenly the great cathedral bells began to ring. From the window she could see people gathering in wildly excited groups. At the instant came a knocking at her own door and Champagneux rushed into the room.

"News, madame!" He waved a bundle of dispatches. "Tremendous news! An uprising in Paris!"

First he told her of Necker's secret *congé* and of Camille Desmoulins' incendiary speech. "All next day the mobs rushed about Paris to get arms. Refused them at the Hôtel de Ville, they forced the gate at Les Invalides and seized guns and cannon. 'On to the Bastille!' was the cry!"

"The Bastille!" exclaimed Marie incredulously. "That impregnable fortress! What madness!"

And then she learned that on the fourteenth of July the Bastille had fallen. No event that ever took place in France before or since aroused such universal amazement as this unexpected victory. Not only was the terrible prison with its moats and towers strongly fortified, but through ages it had personified absolute power. Its pitiless dungeons had swallowed up political prisoners flung in without trial by *lettres de cachet*, and men who had dared by word or deed to defy the ancient order. Therefore, the day of the Bastille's fall at once became a symbol of the crumbling of feudalism, commemorated as the holiday of a free nation.

Madame Roland ran to embrace her husband in transports of rejoicing. She believed this clean, quick stroke had established victory for the people. Like the rest of France she did not foresee the contagion of fury which followed. Every part of the country was affected. Impatient because the Assembly had not yet been able to abolish serfdom and feudal rights, the peasants resolved to repeat the example of Paris. Armed with pitchforks, axes, and old muskets, they marched upon the châteaux. If the lord of the castle refused their demands, the château was attacked and set on fire. Often the owner and his family were either killed or obliged to flee. Convents and monasteries were destroyed, rich farms pillaged, and all authority defied.

Terrified that an attack might have been made on Le Clos, Madame Roland left her convalescing

husband and journeyed thither. At Villefranche she found Canon Dominique in such a rage against the uprising that he almost begrudged the news that Le Clos and its occupants were safe. "Will you admit now that this is revolution?" he roared. But she hurried on to press Eudora to her heart with grateful tears.

Meanwhile events in Paris and Versailles had not tarried. Although Louis immediately recalled Necker, panic gripped the court. The king's ministers resigned. His brothers and most of the courtiers fled the country. To pacify the mob the king allowed the ruffians with their flower-trimmed pikes to escort him into Paris. But, loudly acclaimed though he was, he realized he was no longer the august monarch he had been. And he neither sent away his hired troops nor made any gesture of confidence toward the National Assembly.

This royal ambiguity mystified and troubled the lonely patriot at Le Clos. On July twenty-sixth Madame Roland wrote to Bosc: "Nobody is free. Public confidence is betrayed. It is true that I no longer talk of personal affairs. Who is traitor enough to have any but national affairs?"

Subsequent news, however, proved more heartening. The municipality of Paris was reorganized with a liberal government headed as mayor by Jean-Sylvain Bailly, first president of the Assembly. The National Guard was formed to defend the nation and La Fayette, its commander, proposed as the French insignia the tricolor, red, blue, and white. The Bastille was ordered demolished and its great

key was ultimately sent by La Fayette to General Washington at Mount Vernon. As for the National Assembly, it had so infused its aristocratic members with unselfish fervor that they signed away many of their feudal privileges and serfdom was no more. On the twenty-sixth of August the deputies passed the famous "Declaration of the Rights of Man" which placed all legislation on the basis of liberty and equality. Every patriotic journal in the country immediately printed a summary of the great document.

Before she received a copy of the edict Madame Roland had returned to Lyons and her patient. He was decidedly on the mend. In going over his correspondence she found a letter from Gosse, the savant of Geneva, in which he protested against the recent violence. Instantly she dashed off a reply. "As a matter of fact," she wrote, "there is no great harm done and when the châteaux, the luxury of which has long insulted the people, shall be destroyed by this people, weary of the burden borne during the centuries, I do not see that there will be cause to bewail the public good."

In commenting thus, Madame Roland was neither frivolous nor cruel. Nevertheless, her personality had undergone a change. For the iron of the struggle between liberty and despotism had already entered her soul and she shrank no longer from deeds which once would have made her shudder. The cause of freedom was now her cause and before it she stood a figure of austere consecration. It wasn't until after she had transported Jean-Marie

back to Le Clos in September that she heard of the bread riots at Versailles. And then her sympathy was entirely with the mob and not in the least with the badgered, hesitating king.

Those riots, involving an attack on the palace, had one result of incalculable gravity. For they ended in the people's demanding that Louis accompany them back to Paris. They told him that if only he were there all would be well. In the end he yielded. Accompanied by the queen, their children, and Madame Elizabeth, he entered a coach and drove to the Tuileries. All the way the people, confident now that they would have bread, went shouting, "We have the Baker, the Baker's wife and the Baker's boy!" Louis thought this move a momentary concession. But the royal family were never to see Versailles again. Soon the National Assembly followed the king and met in a hall near the Louvre. And what with the nation redistricted, Paris in liberal hands, the former ministers gone, and the seat of government transferred, France began to realize that the old order had almost disappeared.

To Madame Roland the fact was a fulfilment of a lifelong dream. Once again she wrote to Gosse at Geneva. "It is actually impossible that the revolution be not consummated. The circulation of light for a year has been so rapid and prodigious. The nation takes on a character. The people feel their force. Good men wish for liberty and it will be established despite the groans, cries and innumer-

able efforts of those interested in the abuses of the old régime."

Doubtless she was thinking of Canon Dominique and all Villefranche. It was so unbearable there at this thrilling time that she and Roland went off to Lyons almost as soon as winter had begun. Yet even in Lyons they found a great change. Conservatism was rampant, and those who sympathized with governmental changes were few. The zealous Champagneux, however, was well under way with his paper, the *Courier de Lyons*. And with the aristocrats widely distributing pamphlets against the National Assembly, a liberal journal was never more needed.

Not long after their arrival the Rolands met a famous traveler. Their friend, Benjamin Frossar, invited them to dinner to meet Arthur Young, the English economist. As an expert on agriculture Arthur Young has long been forgotten. He lives as author of a journal covering his trip through France during the revolution of 1789—a journal still read by every student of the period. He proved the most severe critic of conditions in her country whom Marie had ever met. He was appalled at the ignorance, the waste, the poverty, the heartless unconcern of the wealthy owners of estates. Marie was thrilled by all he said. But she must have listened, not replied. For she has gone down in Arthur Young's pages only as the young and pretty wife of Roland, the economist of Lyons.

It was at this time that the Rolands began to hear from Brissot and other Paris friends about a club

they all had joined. It soon took the name of the Jacobin Club and little did the Rolands think when they read of this sober group that it would have such a bearing, not only upon their own destiny, but upon that of all France. For it began most sedately. A Jacobin in 1789 had to be a voter. He believed in the rights of the people, but also in law and order. On the other hand, the man who belonged to the Cordeliers was far different. For anybody, voter or not, could belong to that club and from the first it was controlled by the most violent demagogues. At the other extreme were members of the Feuillants, decidedly conservative, and led by such men as La Fayette and Bailly.

One thing is certain. Every Parisian with revolutionary sympathy in 1789 belonged to one of these several clubs. For not only did they present a coveted opportunity for meeting and for free speech. They were, also, the chief means for spreading the doctrine of the revolution throughout all France. No wonder that in a very short time these political debating societies came to rival in influence the National Assembly!

The fact that all these clubs derived their names from the monasteries in which they met is significant of one of the vast changes which in 1790 was effected by the Assembly. This was the confiscation of those vast properties which throughout the centuries had slowly been accumulated by the Catholic Church until its various orders had possession of nearly a fifth of France. Buildings and fertile acres amounting in revenue to over a hundred mil-

lions had by a movement starting within the clergy themselves been turned over to the State. The holdings and the sale of certain properties served the new government not only as means of support, but as security for the paper currency now circulated, called *assignats*. True, the government promised to reimburse churchmen for lost incomes, but the promise was long in being fulfilled.

In Lyons, however, the formation of these societies did not come quickly. The Rolands shared work for liberty in other ways. In February, 1790, Jean-Marie was elected to the Notables and made a member of the Council General of the Commune where he became leader of the republican minority. Marie's contribution was with her pen. When the great Fête of the Federation was held in Lyons on the thirtieth of May Champagneux asked her to write the story of it for his paper. Brissot, Camille Desmoulins, and scores of other publishers throughout the country copied the thrilling account and those who were in the secret of its anonymous authorship sent her words of high praise.

"You have had a mad success!" cried Champagneux the day after the story appeared. "I have sold thirty thousand copies of my paper. Not a single member of the National Guard wants to return home without it."

Effective as this May celebration had been, it was followed by a stormy reaction in Lyons. And to offset this the liberals hoped to make the Civic Fête in July a means of fusing republican sentiment. For this occasion the Rolands invited Bancal des

Issarts to visit them. And although they had never met him before, they at once took him to their hearts. He came again late in August, this time accompanied by "the little brother." So gloriously congenial was this *partie carrée* that for a moment Marie almost forgot the riots and cabals of Lyons and the pressing problems of the nation. For weeks she had been writing to Bancal and Lanthenas letters in defense of the Lyonnais radicals which were used by Brissot as the basis of many articles in the *Patriote Français*. But now she put aside her pen and yielded to the charm of talks and walks with these dear friends in the peace of autumnal Le Clos. Indeed, this republican idyll was responsible for an innocent, but delicious little flare of romantic feeling between her and Bancal des Issarts and when he left she wrote to him constantly.

Lanthenas, however, stayed on. He dallied lazily with the idea of starting a country medical practice. He helped Roland organize in Lyons a society for political education. He played with Eudora who was growing prettier every day, and most of all he basked in the society of his hostess. The fall ended with Eudora's being placed to board among trustworthy friends, with a family celebration of Madame de la Platière's ninetieth birthday, with a final break between the Rolands and Dominique, with Roland's election to municipal office, and a migration of Marie, Jean-Marie, Lanthenas, and Marguerite Fleury to the Lyons apartment.

But they did not remain there long. Roland had shown the municipality that with an empty treasury

and mountainous debts there was nothing left but bankruptcy. Now he presented a way out. This was to ask the National Assembly to nationalize the city debt. The plan was accepted and he was asked to go to Paris and carry it out.

Imagine Madame Roland's excitement when she heard the news! At last she was to be on the very scene of action. In a passion of impatience she delved into a flurry of packing and preparation and chafed until the moment when she and Roland, Lanthenas, and Marguerite Fleury stepped into the *diligence* bound for the capital. It was the twentieth of February, 1791, when for the first time in nearly seven years Marie once more set foot on the familiar streets of Paris.

This time they stopped at the Hôtel Britannique, 12 rue Guénégaud on the left bank. That eighteenth century house is standing today and on the second floor where the Rolands took rooms one may still see traces of the old decorations. In the end, Marie made the place quite cosy with books and a "forte piano." But at first, even before she had helped Fleury unpack, she had to dash out to see what was going on.

Chapter Five

IT WAS young Louis Bosc who first escorted Madame Roland to the National Assembly. The riding hall of the Tuileries where the deputies met terminated a rough racing course—now the handsome rue de Rivoli—and stood where the present rue Castiglioni intersects the avenue. Within the building the deputies sat facing a tribune or platform where the president directed discussion. On the right sat the conservatives, on the left, the radicals. As Marie and Bosc looked down upon them from the visitors' gallery the latter pointed out everyone of note.

He had just indicated the three founders of the Jacobin Club when his attention was distracted. "There," said Bosc, "look at that young man rising in his seat on the left! He's only a little lawyer from Arras and a commonplace speaker. And yet, there is something about him which makes us think he may go far."

Madame Roland's eyes fixed the correct, dandified figure with the carefully powdered *perruque* framing the thin-lipped face. There was nothing in his aspect to suggest that some day this man was to be known all over France, all over the world, and that his name was never to be spoken without a shudder for the terrible power he wielded. Indif-

ferently she asked his identity. It was Maximilien Robespierre.

The names, opinions, and deeds of most of these men Marie already knew by heart. To see with her own eyes those who were making history filled her with exultation. "What is the question now being debated?" she inquired eagerly.

Bosc told her that amendments were being proposed to the Civil Constitution of the clergy. These were meant to satisfy infuriated Catholics who protested that the edict making priestly offices elective upset the entire Church organization. "Mirabeau is eager for such concessions. He has just been elected speaker. *Voilà!* He is mounting the tribune now!"

Marie regarded intently that great head with the Gothic eyebrows arching up to the white *perruque*. "How powerful he is!" she thought. "There is sweeping conviction in every word and gesture."

After the session was over she and her companion strolled back the long way over the Pont-Royal and then by the *quais*. "Well, what are your first impressions?" asked young Bosc, smiling down into her absorbed face. "A great deal of water has flowed under this bridge since you and I last went about Paris."

"Oh, I am a partisan!" she laughed. "I confess to being deeply vexed to find nearly all the distinguished manners, purity of diction and practiced oratory concentrated among the conservatives. Yet, of course, I believe the great principles of the Left will triumph!"

"Mirabeau is the only great radical leader," pursued her companion. "But his vicious life has ruined his prestige. Physically, too, he is fast going to pieces. This is all the more unfortunate because of his great influence with the king. He is far more potent than La Fayette. The queen, however, distrusts them both."

"I don't trust La Fayette either, as you know."

"Yes," he chuckled, "he is too cool and logical for you. He has no sympathy with violence."

The two friends had now reached the Hôtel Britannique. Before the door Madame Roland looked up at Bosc with a defiant toss of her head. "Violence is sometimes necessary!"

"Ah, dear madame," he retorted, "you have defended with eloquence the rioters of Lyons. But wait until you see the Paris mob in action. Then you'll wonder whether the end justifies the means."

But he spoke to one who was determined to see nothing but good in every revolutionary group. The next day Marie visited for the first time the famous Jacobin Club and felt then what she later wrote to Bancal des Issarts: "At last I have seen the fires of liberty lighted in my country. It shall be a good thing if it devours the remaining vestiges of despotism and makes thrones to crumble."

Before the week was out the Rolands had met the men who were the coming leaders of the revolution. The first of these was Jacques-Pierre Brissot. After all their correspondence the three met as old friends. Marie found his simplicity, his frankness, and the austerity of his principles just what she would have

expected. She thought him wanting in shrewdness, but found this quality supplemented by his excellent and likable wife.

Brissot's importance as a journalist was now rivaled by his prestige as a leader in the Jacobin Club. He and Lanthenas promptly took Roland there and introduced him to all the influential members. Many of these were almost immediately brought to the Hôtel Britannique to meet Marie. Jérôme Pétion and the gifted orator, Pierre Vergniaud, were among the most distinguished. Far less so in personality and speech was the man whom Bosc had indicated in the assembly. But, although Maximilien Robespierre seemed mediocre and cold, his sincerity and industry secured Marie's instant approval.

One evening Pétion brought to her *salon* a young deputy from Evreux. He had already been described to her as "a quiet, dreamy, ardent fellow," who had been marked in the Assembly for proposing some very liberal measures. The newcomer proved to be a slender young man of medium height who carried himself with a certain natural elegance. His far-apart, intelligent eyes, his fresh coloring, and pleasing features gave him an appearance of more than ordinary charm. As Pétion pronounced his name Madame Roland exchanged with him a glance charged with that unexpected intensity which marks a powerful mutual attraction. It was thus that she first met François Buzot.

To talk to him was to find many points of agreement between his temperament and her own. His

lonely childhood had made him shy. He, too, had loved Plutarch and Rousseau. He, too, had been happiest when wandering in the woods and fields. Marie's instinctive sympathy with this man was heightened by her quick divination of his self-discipline. How different from the easygoing ways of Bosc and "the little brother." Buzot, like Pétion, invited Marie to meet his wife. But, though she was a pleasant young woman, she lacked the force characteristic alike of Madame Pétion and Madame Brissot.

Not many weeks passed away before Marie and her husband became completely identified with this group of men. Regularly four times a week the Rolands received from twelve to fifteen of them. They would foregather after dinner and before the meeting of the Jacobin Club. These were busy patriots. Either they were deputies who sat all day in the Assembly or they were engaged in absorbing projects. Probably they would never have shown this thirst for more political discussion had it not been for one reason.

She sat there, the reason, in the background, sewing or writing letters. She said little. But her glowing eyes turned frequently upon her guests, the fascination of her personality and the dedication of her spirit proved an irresistible magnet to the entire group. When she did speak the extraordinary beauty of her voice, phrasing some penetrating or fervent comment, offered an irresistible appeal. Only Robespierre remained detached, incalculable. Buzot thought him enigmatic and ambitious.

Early in the spring of 1791 the great Mirabeau died. The court as well as the city mourned him sincerely and the entire Assembly attended his funeral. Madame Roland and her husband walked over to the rue de la Harpe to see the cortège pass up the hill to the church of Sainte-Geneviève—a structure lately named the Panthéon and dedicated TO THE GREAT MEN OF A GRATEFUL COUNTRY. There his body was placed in state after a ceremony which Marie called "more splendid than the funeral of kings."

With Mirabeau was buried much knowledge of the intrigues surrounding Louis Seize. The Comte d'Artois, brother of the king, and all the aristocrats who had escaped from France never ceased plotting to restore the old régime. It was known that the queen had, up to the very moment of his death, tried to get her brother Joseph Second of Austria to undertake the rescue of the royal family of France. True, the plot was slow to crystallize. Rival nations were not altogether sorry for the plight of France. Moreover, Louis was reluctant to make terms with foreign powers against his own people. Yet, the agitation, fomented by Marie-Antoinette, was always seething and the revolutionists, sensing it, ceaselessly watched the king.

An instance of this restless suspicion occurred when Louis planned to take his family to spend Lent with his aunts at Saint-Cloud. La Fayette with his National Guards and Bailly, the mayor, proffered willing escort. But rumor had spread through Paris that the king was fleeing the country.

George-Jacques Danton, leader of the Cordeliers Club, declared that the monarch meant to revolt against the Constitution and would return only at the head of foreign armies. Thus inflamed, the people rushed to the Tuileries in such numbers and pressed about the royal coach with such angry protestations that the party could not proceed and the plan had to be abandoned.

This new check to the sovereign will was hotly discussed at the Hôtel Britannique. Some of the group thought the king should have had a holiday. Others asserted he was not to be trusted and should never leave Paris. Buzot reminded his friends that with the Constitution not yet signed and every city full of reactionary aristocrats it was no time to take any chances. There were too many plots about the king.

Suddenly Madame Roland asked, "But suppose Louis should leave the country? Couldn't we then establish a true republic like that of the United States?"

As she spoke she found fixed upon her the glittering eyes of Maximilien Robespierre. "But you talk as if he would not come back, leading Prussian and Austrian armies! Why, he'd join with the refugee nobles and return to make mincemeat of us!" A visible shudder shook him.

The remark was typical of the general unsteadiness of public confidence. The new government found it difficult to function. It was hard to collect taxes and the paper currency depreciated constantly. To secure means to stabilize it the Assembly passed

a decree demanding extra taxes from all cities—a measure which retarded Roland's effort to settle the debt of Lyons. He was busier and more harassed than the deputies these days.

Marie, on the other hand, was having the time of her life. She had visited all her old associates—the Bernards, Madame Trude, and Sister Agathe. Moreover, she herself had received an unexpected call from Henriette Vouglans, recently a widow The latter brought news of her sister which struck Marie to the heart. For Sophie was incurably ill with an affection of the lungs. Henriette's loyal affection for Marie was undiminished. Indeed, she gave every indication of admiring her friend more than ever and with her farewell embrace promised to visit her again—a promise kept under the most incredible circumstances.

Aside from these familiar contacts, aside from her political *salon*, Madame Roland was invited to many informal gatherings. Anxious as they usually were, Brissot's associates possessed a spirit of gaiety which enlivened many a dinner party. Marie met Thomas Paine, the famous American agnostic philosopher. And he who could speak no French was delighted at her exceptional ability to understand a little English. Paine was passionately interested in the revolution and a great admirer of Brissot. He considered the latter an unworldly idealist because Brissot was satisfied to earn a bare living for his family from *Le Patriote Français*.

Marie was now beginning to be impatient with Bancal des Issarts because he was traveling in Eng-

land instead of working for France. She and Lanthenas and Roland all wrote to beg him to return. For they felt that as a devoted Catholic he might help spread the new principles of liberty among antagonistic Romanists. Attempts to enforce the Civil Constitution of the clergy had met with fierce opposition. At Avignon, that ancient seat of the Popes, a bloody struggle was going on. Nor was the edict made any more digestible by the king's opposition to it. Indeed, His Majesty was proving far from tractable and the radicals were sure he was plotting the downfall of the government.

This France of 1791 was torn by fiercely conflicting impulses. There were those who wanted to abolish the Church altogether and those who resented every attempt to diminish the age-old power of the Pope. There were starving peasants and workingmen simply biding their time to wreak a long-repressed vengeance for their wrongs. As for idealists, like Madame Roland, who had dreamed all their lives of a free country, they were impatient of every obstacle to immediate success. And there were others who shuddered to see the nation directed by untrained men and longed only for a return to power of both king and court.

Such counselors of Louis begged him to escape with his family to the border town of Metz. There he could join the aristocrats already fled and lead them in an effort to make these revolutionary fanatics listen to reason. There is no doubt that Louis hearkened to such tempting offers, backed up by the urging of the queen. Yet, with his hatred of civil

war, he preferred to believe in his vague way that once out of the din of Paris he might bring about a reconciliation between the *noblesse* and the revolutionists.

On the twenty-first of June Madame Roland, rising later than usual, went to the window to admit the morning sunshine. As she did so she noticed men running down the rue Guénégaud or gathering in agitated groups. Heads were popping out of windows across the street and far off along the *quai* came the sound of a crier bawling news. What had happened? She roused her husband and dressed with the greatest haste. As she stepped into the *salon* she heard an urgent ringing of her bell and a moment later Lanthenas rushed into the room.

"Where is Roland?" he cried. "Madame, the king has escaped! The royal family have left the Tuileries. They fled in the night—no one knows where. What is going to happen? Get our friend and we'll go to the Assembly!"

In a few moments the three were hastening over the Pont-Neuf toward the Tuileries. On every corner knots of people were gesticulating excitedly. National Guardsmen were striding to headquarters to obtain orders. Hawkers were selling printed sheets announcing the escape and in front of the Assembly a large crowd had already gathered. But neither there nor anywhere could be gleaned an inkling of how the *coup* had been pulled off.

Before the deputies the president of the Assembly announced that the king and his family had been removed during the night by enemies of the com-

monwealth. Instantly a decree for pursuit was passed. La Fayette was at first thought involved in the plot. But his obvious humiliation at his sovereign's failure to confide in him put to rout the suspicion. He and Bailly held a consultation and, fearing civil war, ordered the arrest of the royal family. A small detachment of the Guard led by two aides-de-camp were sent forth to execute the order.

Paris was thunderstruck. All business was at a standstill. Everybody with sad and anxious faces ran about to discuss the event with everybody else and rumor ran wild. Plots! Plots! The nobles were rising. They would join with the refugees and the king and, backed by Prussian soldiers, would restore the old régime and undo all which had been accomplished for liberty—so ran the fearful tale. Madame Roland, on the arm of her husband, listened to its every version. "I don't believe it! Liberty is too strong with us to be so easily crushed!" she kept saying and a perverse elation filled her heart.

In the afternoon she and Roland, dropping in at Pétion's house, found Brissot there in a state of uplifted excitement akin to her own and Robespierre in quite another frame of mind. Skulking in a corner, he sat biting his nails and rolling his small eyes like an animal at bay.

Standing before him in all the radiance of her undaunted faith, she said, "But you are not dismayed, are you? Surely not a patriot like you?"

His thin lips snarled. "Dismayed? Don't you

know that the king has well prepared for such a move? He must have left in Paris a coalition ready. They will order a Saint-Bartholomew of the patriots! Why, in twenty-four hours I don't expect to be alive!" His voice rose shrilly.

At these words the glance bent upon him seemed only to grow more luminous. Madame Roland turned to the other two men, with a gesture which beseeched them to speak. Pétion replied promptly: "On the contrary, the flight of the king is his undoing. We have only to profit by it."

Brissot chimed in firmly: "Never was the disposition of the people better. This act will but serve to show the perfidy of the court. It's clear the king does not wish the Constitution he swore to support and this is the very moment to prepare the nation for a republic."

Robespierre, however, only chewed his nails the harder, emitted his malicious half-laugh, and then asked scornfully, "And what is a republic?"

Madame Roland lifted her lovely head and said in a soft, ringing tone, "A republic! Something to live and die for!" Extending her hand to the abject man before her, she said: "What difference does it make whether the king comes back or not? There are plenty of patriots to fight for liberty. Courage, my friend!" She swept the others with her smile and on her husband's arm she went away. It was like a light going out.

So far from right had been the fears of Robespierre that never was Paris more orderly than on the twenty-second of June. Business was resumed. At

the Assembly was read the king's letter addressed to the deputies on the day of his departure and only now delivered. Louis said that he found it impossible to work for good and prevent evil in Paris and therefore sought to recover his liberty and place his family in safety. Pétion, Robespierre, and Buzot responded with speeches denouncing the good faith of the monarch and Madame Roland in the gallery joined in the applause. Then the delegates issued a circular to be sent to every town and village in France. Announcing the king's flight, it assured every citizen that "All patriots are united. The National Assembly is our Guide. The Constitution is our rallying cry."

That evening when Madame Roland was writing the news to Bancal, Louis Bosc burst into the room like a whirlwind. "At last!" he cried exultingly, "News, madame! News, monsieur! The royal party have been arrested at Varennes. The couriers have just arrived at the Assembly!"

Breathlessly the Rolands plied their questions. But all Bosc knew was that the king had with him only a few dragoons and that he had made no resistance. Already the coach had been turned back to Paris by La Fayette's aides. "Tomorrow," said Bosc, "we'll have the details."

Yes, Madame Roland with her friends learned next day the details of the story. But could she for one moment project herself into the impulses and emotions behind that royal attempt to escape? Not she. Her imagination was pledged to the side of the revolution. All she could feel was indigna-

tion and triumph. She missed all the romance and pathos which made the flight to Varennes the most colorful incident of this period.

But from our vantage point of detachment we can follow every stage of this drama. We can go back to the night of June twentieth and watch the excited family group gather in one of the lower halls of the dim old palace of the Tuileries. It is very late. The turbulent Paris which knows so well how to check the plans of kings is quiet. By the candle he holds Louis looks once more at the passports made out to the Baron Korf. He is dressed as a *valet de chambre* and the queen is in a plain, dark frock. Little Madame Elizabeth, the two children, and the governess are eager to be off. The immediate destination is a great coach packed with luggage which waits at the northeastern gate of Paris under the escort of a number of horsemen and a Swedish gentleman devoted to the queen. She is to slip out by a back entrance with a bodyguard. The others will take a hackney cab. Now! They embrace each other and the lackey, wishing them Godspeed, softly closes the great door.

Unhappily the queen's bodyguard loses his way and they start in the wrong direction. Passing a man who walks late and alone, Marie-Antoinette's heart leaps to her throat. It is La Fayette. But in that muffled figure he does not recognize royalty. At last she reaches the coach. The children fling themselves into her arms, half-dead with fear because of her long delay. They pass unquestioned through the city barriers and are off on the long

journey. Montmédy is the place where General Bouillon is to meet the coach with troops. They are to cross the very territory of the Argonne where a hundred and twenty years later American soldiers were to fight in the great World War.

Can you conceive the anxiety of these travelers? At every town they expect to be stopped. Over and over again six hearts skip a beat as passports are examined. Well they know that provincial officials through Jacobin energy are in constant touch with Paris. Can you imagine the weariness of riding night and day and again half the night in the lumbering coach with scarce change of position? And then can you share the elation as mile after mile rolls by to the border and liberty? At Chalons-sur-Marne in the late afternoon somebody murmurs, "*Mon Dieu!* The king!" Then a hand is waved, a kiss blown from the royal sympathizer. One more escape!

At Sainte-Menehould, however, a young man near the examiner of passports looks sharply into the coach. He starts in surprise and then his face sets in resolution. The queen is faint with alarm. On starts the coach. But not far along the road it is passed by a horseman riding at full gallop. Is this sinister figure an informer? Ah, may Bouillon be ready! May he send an advance guard ahead!

Through lingering dusk they ride into the blackness of night. Four and twenty hours of riding now! The coach rattles and jolts through sleeping villages. It is midnight. They are reaching the small town of Varennes where they must change

horses. As they clatter to a stop in the village square they experience the terrible surprise of finding people standing about, lights in the houses, men with muskets running towards them. What is this? Ah, the village is aroused. The tocsin has sounded. Here they are within six leagues of the border and the jig is up.

Menacing figures surround the coach as the passports are taken to the town officer who has a grocery on the square. The little man is terrified. But he does his duty. To avoid the insults of the angry crowd the party accepts his polite invitation to enter his house. Sick with fright the three elders conduct the sleepy and exhausted children to the humble bed-chamber up the crooked stairs.

Yes, the jig is up. The rider from Sainte-Menehould who recognized the king had given the alarm. And for all the pleas of Louis, the threats of his bodyguard, and the proud commands of the queen fresh horses are refused. More men with muskets gather to guard the bridge. Gradually a bitter despair seeps into those six hearts which but a few hours ago had been buoyant. At dawn the royal fate is sealed. Two soldiers are admitted. They are the aides-de-camp of La Fayette and they possess an official warrant for the arrest of Louis and his queen.

Feel if you can the agony of that return journey! Hostile faces all along the road; weariness unsustained by hope. Halfway back an unwelcome escort meets them sent from the National Assembly —Pétion, Barnave, and a friend of La Fayette's.

Suffering royalty finds Barnave humanely sympathetic, but the bold Pétion intolerable in his triumphant familiarity. As they reach Paris the weary eyes of the captured behold the placards set up at the street corners: "Whoever cheers the king will be flogged. Whoever insults him will be hanged." Crowds are in the streets, crowds in every square, and all as still as death. Such was the greeting to the monarch, a silence which Mirabeau once called "the lesson of kings."

These days of horror for one set of actors on the gigantic stage had proved for the revolutionists days of jubilant activity. Madame Roland had gone about from morning till night on the twenty-third in a consuming desire to determine the trend of opinion. That night she wrote again to Bancal: "I attended a session of the Jacobin Club this evening. All the members, sword in hand, took an oath 'to die free or to die.' The whole day long couriers upon couriers have been arriving! But what are we to do with the king and queen now that they have been arrested? I said, sequester the one and try the other. But the Assembly isn't up to that."

Again she wrote: "I am going to all the societies to see what they are doing. I cannot stay at home. Things change too quickly." In the afternoon she went with her husband to the Assembly. That day there occurred a great demonstration from radical hoi polloi of the Faubourg Saint-Antoine. Brandishing pikes and singing the desperate song of former days, "Ça ira," these ruffians and fishwives marched about the hall and then before the tribune

took an oath to be faithful to the nation. Madame Roland watched the scene with scornful eyes. "Can this exhibition of trivial energy encourage republicanism?" she asked Roland.

Bosc and Lanthenas came in to see her after dinner that evening and they talked for hours of the best means to deal with the fugitive and captured monarch. The royalists in the Assembly were already gathering to his defense. That very day the president had wanted a decree to preserve the sovereign's power. Finally, weary as she was, Marie said to her husband and friends: "Well, since your arguments have at last yielded to mine, let us go and present the result to Buzot."

Luckily he did not live far away and after a late séance at the Assembly he was still up. Instantly they plunged into the discussion. To put the king back on the throne after such an act of faithlessness was an anomaly. A regency wouldn't do, for who would be regent? Civil war lay that way. No, the only possible measure was suspension of powers and virtual imprisonment in the Tuileries.

Buzot listened with keen attention. Lanthenas and Roland had been the spokesmen. At last he turned to Madame Roland. "And you? What do you think?" he asked deferentially.

"But these are her arguments," laughed Lanthenas. "She has convinced us all." And through Buzot, Pétion, and Robespierre the arguments which were Madame Roland's were presented to the Assembly.

Support for them was offered by the popular fury

against a faithless king. Madame Roland wrote to Bancal on July first, "They have suppressed his name, his face, his arms. The notaries have been obliged to remove [from their official stamps] the fleur-de-lys. The king has no other appellation than 'the big pig' or 'Louis the False.' Caricatures of every kind present emblems best calculated to increase disdain and it is impossible that the people will see again on the throne a being so completely despised."

However, it was Brissot who finally on the eleventh of July put to rout the royal apologists among the deputies of the Assembly. First he proved that the king *could* be judged for his acts and, second, that he *must* be judged. Finally, he declared that punishment by suspension of sovereign powers was the only course open to delegates who had made themselves responsible for the welfare of a nation.

Madame Roland who heard the great speech from the gallery wrote to Bancal: "Brissot was no longer merely an orator. He was a free man defending the cause of mankind with the majesty, nobility and superiority of the very genius of liberty. He convinced the mind, electrified the soul, commanded what he wished. There was, not applause, but shouting, transports. Three times the Assembly, carried away, rose as one—arms extended, hats in air, in an enthusiasm inexpressible. Perish that man who has ever shared these great movements and who could again take on his chains!"

Such were the consequences of the flight to Varennes. Nevertheless, the republican course was not

to run smooth. Only a few days after Brissot's triumph the liberals experienced a serious check. The occasion was a great fête celebrated the seventeenth of July on the Champ-de-Mars as part of the annual memorial to the Bastille's fall. Both Jacobins and Cordeliers were to present petitions before the altar of the new State. The moderates demanded the trial of the king at the end of his period of suspension, the Cordeliers urged his abdication. Meanwhile wind of these petitions had reached the conservatives and they had gone to warn La Fayette and the mayor.

As soon as the demagogues from the Cordeliers Club had finished their long harangues the Jacobins seized the stage and presented Robespierre as their speaker. Well known as he was at his club, this was the first time he had appeared before the assembled populace. Madame Roland, who was on the scene accompanied by her husband, Bosc, and Lanthenas, was thrilled to hear the cheers which greeted him. Bosc, however, observing the flushed triumphant look of the man welcomed as the people's hero, said with a touch of satire, "Now we'll see if the small-town lawyer can stand this adulation."

That he could not was soon apparent. Intoxicated by this, his first great moment, Robespierre went farther than he intended in his radical denunciation of the king. From the conservative section of his hearers a fierce tide of ill will set in upon the speaker and applause was drowned by growls and angry threats.

At that very instant the entire scene changed.

Bailly, the mayor, who had decided that the crowd might prove seditious, was arriving with a detachment of troops. Before them was borne the red flag of martial law proclaiming authority to use force against rioters. La Fayette, present with his National Guards, at once commanded the people to disperse. But the crowd was only enraged at this show of opposition. The tumult increased and no one left the field. La Fayette then ordered the guards to fire blank cartridges in air. Still the furious throng refused to budge. At last, the general gave the order to charge and fire. Several citizens were killed and the cavalry swept clear the Champ-de-Mars.

Whether the mob was really dangerous and the general's order justified is still open to controversy. Certainly the people never forgave La Fayette his share in what was ever after called "the massacre of the Champ-de-Mars." Madame Roland, seething with indignation, reminded her companions on the way home that she had always said the marquis was an enemy to the liberal cause. At any rate that cause had now received a severe setback. All the petitions were suppressed. Radical journals were confiscated and several men arrested.

Early that evening word came to the Rolands that Robespierre, himself, was threatened with a process. Madame Roland was aghast. "Let us go to his house, my friend," said she to Jean-Marie, "and offer him the shelter of our apartment. We cannot let him be arrested."

Forthwith they both set out to the rue Saint-

Honoré. One may still find the very court through which Robespierre passed every day, but little trace of the original house where he lived remains. The proprietor, who admired the deputy immensely, told the Rolands that Robespierre was not at home. "I fear for the young man's safety," said he. "I hear violence was done this afternoon at the fête and God knows where such things end these days."

Roland tried to reassure him. But on the way home he and Marie resolved to stop at Buzot's house and get his assistance. Madame Buzot, with her insipid smile, received them cordially and summoned her husband. His look of crisp grace made Marie wish, even in the midst of her excitement, that Jean-Marie would ever achieve something of his elegance.

The errand was explained. "Can't you," asked Roland, "go to the Feuillants Club to set forth to the conservatives Robespierre's position and defend him against their persecution?"

Buzot hesitated. "I am far from sharing the opinion of many people regarding Robespierre," said he. "That young man thinks too much of himself to love liberty enough." Then the speaker caught in Madame Roland's eyes an appeal he could not resist. Suddenly his reluctance disappeared. Smiling, he said, "However, the man serves the cause and that is enough for me. I shall do what I can to save this unfortunate individual."

Madame Roland thanked him from the depths of her generous heart. Little did she guess that the

man for whom she warmly interceded then was two years later to be the willing instrument of her doom.

After the Champ-de-Mars affair the conservatives took new hold on things. They vetoed the more drastic insertions in the final draft of the Constitution and crushed any further attempt to bring the king to trial. They got an edict passed closing the Assembly to visitors and jailed the publisher of the most inflammatory journal in Paris. This was called *The People's Friend* and its editor was Jean-Paul Marat. Madame Roland was sorry for him at the time and thought him a martyr to the cause of free speech. For once again her intensity lacked perspective. Not long hence this very Marat was to seem to her the embodiment of all that was dark and terrible in the revolution. However, her friends were no better gifted with foresight than she. They were appalled at the sudden flood of reactionary publications in Paris and at the difficulty of restoring frank discussion among the abashed members of the clubs.

Indeed, Brissot and his friends drew largely upon Madame Roland's store of optimism these days. And, delighted as they were that Roland was at last succeeding with his mission, they regretted intensely that its consummation would take the Rolands back to Lyons. As for those two, the thought of leaving the rich and varied contacts of Paris filled them both with gloom. Only the possibility that Jean-Marie might be elected to the new assembly buoyed up their spirits.

Marie was to precede her husband to Ville-

franche. She was to be accompanied, not only by Fleury, who could hardly wait to start, but by a new friend acquired through Bosc. She was Madame Sophie Grandchamps. Strangely enough, when that odd young man learned his friend's plan he had one of his unreasoning outbursts of temper, quarreled with Madame Grandchamps and was only again reconciled with her after Marie had spent months in diplomatic endeavors.

It seemed to Madame Roland that last week of her sojourn that everybody in the capital was coming to bid her farewell. "You are our inspiration and you must not hide away in the provinces," said Brissot warmly. Even the reserved Robespierre paid his respects. He had never directly acknowledged her efforts in his behalf that July night. Perhaps he was ashamed of having hidden away for many days, only reappearing in the Assembly when the excitement of reaction had passed by. Buzot pressed her hand with fervent regret. She bade him adieu with a queer twist of the heart. "You will write me, will you not?" she asked. He promised, plumbing her eyes.

Marie was grateful for the diverting companionship of Sophie Grandchamps on the long journey, grateful for the wildly joyous greeting of little Eudora. Of this she wrote gloatingly to Bancal: "I shall never forget the moment when my Eudora flung herself into my arms, when our tears and our sobs were blended."

Yet nothing could diminish her sense of exile. Too bitter was the contrast between the stirring at-

mosphere of Paris and the dead hostility of Villefranche where everybody followed brother Dominique in regarding her as a hateful radical. Moreover, it looked as though she were doomed to remain in it. For Champagneux, to whom she wrote on arrival, reported regretfully that Roland's name had not come up among the candidates for the new Assembly. He himself was now a municipal officer and he was most desirous of having Roland again in the city government.

Indeed, when Roland arrived to report the success of his mission, he was offered a position in the municipality of Lyons. But he refused it in order to supervise the vintage at Le Clos. Marie took Fleury and Eudora to join him there. But, although she flung herself into her dual rôle of country châtelaine and secretary to Jean-Marie, it was with a heart that never ceased to ache for the activities of Paris.

Only one thing pierced the tedium, letters from friends. Bancal wrote first. He ended a long discussion by correspondence with Roland and Lanthenas regarding the possible mutual purchase of one of the church properties for sale all over France. Now Bancal said he'd bought through Bosc a tiny place in the forest of Montmorency. Bosc and "the little brother," Brissot, and even Robespierre sent news. Then, at last, the courier brought the envelope for which Marie's eyes had looked so eagerly —a letter from François Buzot. Oh, of course, she took it straight to read to Roland and answered it in both their names. But now Marie's letters were not censored and between her comments on

events she could tuck something to convey the peculiar sympathy she felt for this high-souled patriot. Letter followed letter. Buzot wrote that he was not returning to Paris, but, after an ovation at Evreux, had been elected president of the criminal tribunal of the Eure.

If anything could have reconciled Marie to absence from the capital it was this news. But nothing could do that. She followed events with a forlorn sense of being out of things. On the fourteenth of September the great document on which the deputies had labored so long had at last been passed. Next it was signed by the king and the Constitution became a fact. Soon afterwards the Assembly was disbanded and on October first the Legislative Assembly was convened. The new body, like the king, was committed to the task of applying the measures of the Constitution. But the liberals still found Louis's attitude equivocal and rumor had it he kept in close touch with the nobles beyond Metz whom he had so narrowly failed to join. Brissot's journal pointed out that the more successful was the revolutionary government, the more hostile grew the allied powers of Europe. The deputy-publisher declared that before she was attacked by them France should strike the nations which harbored refugee aristocrats.

Oh, it was unbearable to miss the ever-changing scene. Madame Roland wrote to Bancal: "I feel myself made for an active rôle and for public service." Surely this was not the time to devote herself to vines and vats. Nor did Lyons offer a real oppor-

tunity. As autumn drew to a close she determined to persuade Roland to return to Paris. She amassed her reasons—the great libraries for his work on the Encyclopedia, the Jacobin Club which could enlist his talents. Moreover, now he should present a claim for a pension in return for his long service to the government. To her surprise Roland offered little opposition. He, too, thought the capital a better field for work than Lyons and even when in December the latter city elected him to an important office he did not waver. Paris it was to be.

This time, to Marguerite Fleury's joy, Eudora was to accompany her parents. Marie's spirits were soaring. As she went about preparing for departure her mind was filled with eager anticipation of renewed contacts with events and with the men who brought about those events. The vision she cherished of playing a part in the revolution was prophetic. Yet little did she foresee as she journeyed toward Paris in the swaying *diligence* what grim and glorious destiny awaited her.

No hint, however, of a brilliant future transpired at first. Madame Roland found everything quite changed. Almost she regretted coming. For her *salon* at the Hôtel Britannique where they stopped once more was now practically deserted. Buzot, of course, was absent. Jérôme Pétion had been made mayor of Paris in Bailly's place and both he and his wife were tremendously occupied. So was Brissot. Both as leader of the Jacobins and member of the new Assembly he was the man of the hour. Vergniaud was running a political *salon* of his own

and all the men who used to surround Marie now gathered in his beautiful rooms on the Place Vendôme. As for Robespierre, now at odds with Brissot, he, too, had a devoted coterie of followers. True, Bancal was in Paris again, and he with Bosc and Lanthenas and sundry friends made much of Madame Roland as of yore. But her significance as a political leader had vanished like smoke.

It was the more disappointing because all the men she had helped to fuse into solidarity had now become enormously important. They were directing the policies of the day. Indeed, they had formed in the Legislative Assembly a party to oppose the monarchists, on the one hand, and the violent radicals, on the other. Because a number of the group came from the department of the Gironde near Bordeaux, they were called the Girondists. Brissot was their leader. With the majority of the liberals who believed in a constitutional monarchy, he was committed to make good the Constitution which placed the king at the head of the nation. And though his own republicanism was more aggressive than that of his followers, he, too, had great respect for law and distrust of violent methods. Therefore, despite his longing further to diminish royal power, he wished to do so in an orderly way. What he hoped for was that the king's own acts would alienate the people.

Even at this time it looked as if that hope might be granted. When Louis was not hesitating about some policy of the Assembly he was in opposition to its decrees. In the fall the deputies had passed

a ruling that all emigrants not returned to France by January 1, 1792, should be declared conspirators liable to capital punishment and confiscation of all revenues. To this act the king refused his sanction.

Likewise, he failed to sign the measure obliging all members of the clergy to take the oath to support the Constitution. If they did so they forswore the authority of the Pope. If they didn't, the decree made them punishable by revocation of salary and prohibition of all private exercise of worship. The act was reprisal for the violence stirred up against the revolutionary government by certain priests and prelates. Both sides were partly wrong and partly right and there was no trusted moderator to reconcile Church and State.

Such were the issues which made every session of the Jacobin Club an exciting debate. Madame Roland attended them often. Lanthenas and Louis Bosc were both on the correspondence committee of the club, and in February Brissot put Roland on the same committee. "We need you," said Brissot. "You can be of immense service to popular education." Thus was effected Roland's first entrance into national politics. But, delighted as they were, neither he nor his brilliant wife dreamed at the moment to what heights it would take them.

Brissot was particularly desirous of gathering about him talented and sympathetic men because of the struggle between himself and Robespierre. The issue between them was now uppermost in the mind of every Frenchman. It was this: should the new France take the offensive against the armies of

Prussia and Poland with whom the fugitive nobles had already formed an alliance? Robespierre believed that the revolutionary armies were not prepared to fight trained troops and that failure would mean an uprising of monarchists within the country and a return of the old régime. To this Brissot returned the answer that in war lay unity of the entire people, and that if the king betrayed the nation then all Frenchmen would rise as one against the sovereign and his supporters. At last, the leader put his views with a boldness which startled the country. Said he, "We have need of being betrayed. Great treason is deadly only to traitors. It is useful to the people."

Brissot's policy triumphed. Early in 1792 Louis sent a note to the Assembly sadly declaring himself resigned to the war. Instantly La Fayette was recalled from Auvergne to get the army into shape. Its marshals were Luckner and the son of that General Rochambeau who had fought in America—appointments which indicated that the conservatives had joined the Girondists to support the campaign. The radicals, however, led by Robespierre, Georges Danton, and Jean-Paul Marat, predicted nothing but disaster from fighting with stronger nations. Marat and Robespierre scornfully declared that in agreeing to fight Louis had recovered his popularity.

The truth of this statement Madame Roland observed with her own eyes. One night she went with Lanthenas to see the great actor Talma. He was playing at the theater erected in 1789 in a corner of the Palais-Royal—the very edifice which today

houses the great institution of dramatic culture called the Théâtre Français. At some point in the play that night a speech of Talma gave the audience one of their coveted opportunities to intrude political emotion. Some one shouted, "*Vive le roi!*" and half the audience rose to cheer the royal family. Madame Roland turned indignantly to her companion: "What a vacillating nation of children is ours! How can it ever grasp republican principles?"

Never for an instant did this woman's patriotic fervor abate. Even when she walked with Eudora in the frozen dignity of the Luxembourg gardens she usually persuaded Sophie Grandchamps or Lanthenas to go along for the purpose of discussing national events. Yet the only active outlet for her interest was helping Roland with the letters he wrote for the Jacobins to every corner of France. She missed her "*salon*" profoundly and, although her friends told her what went on in Vergniaud's drawing room, such contact was remote to one who used to be the very hub of the republican wheel.

Perhaps it was with an idea of luring her group about her once more that Madame Roland urged her husband to take an apartment. A pleasant one had been offered them in the house of some friends of theirs, Monsieur and Madame Jean-Alexandre Cauchois, on the rue de la Harpe opposite the church of Saint-Côme. One can find today the exact location of the house which stood where three modern streets converge. But the church is gone and all but a fragment of the long crooked avenue,

once the rue de la Harpe, was swallowed up in the middle of the last century by the boulevard Saint-Michel, famous highway of the Latin Quarter.

To get the apartment ready revived Marie's spirits. She and Eudora shopped for the taffeta draperies with which it was hung and the checked voile for the glass curtains—blue in the bedroom, yellow in the *salon*. The latter was fitted out with those deep-seated chairs called *bergères* which were upholstered in Utrecht velvet. Modest, but charming, was the little place with Marguerite Fleury to cook and a new valet, Louis Lecoq. During the second week of March they were installed.

Madame Roland would have liked at once to give a dinner. But whom to have? Bosc was still at odds with Madame Grandchamps. Besides, the new measures of economy applied at the Bureau des Postes had resulted in his having to take a subordinate position rather than resign and in consequence he was not feeling very gay. Bancal had left Paris again to assume municipal duties in Clermont. Vergniaud, Pétion, and Brissot were now busier than ever. For they were anticipating the fall of the king's ministry, which was in dissension over war plans, and together they were preparing a list of possible candidates for the new cabinet.

Yes, in spite of her yellow drawing room, in spite of her husband's many distinguished connections, in spite of her own friends and her undiminished passion for the cause, Madame Roland felt at this moment decidedly out of the picture. But suddenly the canvas shifted. Brissot had not forgotten her.

During the very week that the resignation of Louis's ministers took place, he came late one night to ring her bell. With him was the new minister of Foreign Affairs, the well-known ex-officer of the army and man of the world. This was Charles-François Dumouriez, soon to become famous.

As Brissot entered his frank face was alight, his hands joyously outstretched. "My dear friend," he said to Roland, "I congratulate you. Monsieur Dumouriez has a message for you from the king." It was an invitation to Roland de la Platière to become minister of the Interior.

Chapter Six

THAT was just the way things happened then. On the twenty-third of March Madame Roland rose from her bed a nobody. The same night she went to sleep the most potentially powerful woman in Paris. The instant her husband became minister she became the focus of the Girondist party. All she had ever needed was an official connection with affairs to begin her great rôle.

And against what a setting did she play it! The ministry of the Interior to which they moved within a week was the very mansion which Calonne was redecorating when she was in Paris in '84. Here in this superb palace on the rue Neuf-des-Petits-Champs had been received all the fashionables of the old régime. And Madame Roland was conscious of the contrast. As she and her homespun husband and two servants stood with luggage piled about in that magnificent *salon*, she gazed up at the hand-painted ceilings with twinkling eyes.

"What would Monsieur Calonne say now?" she asked Roland merrily. "What a turn of fortune's wheel! Here we are! Here is the woman once too humble for a word with the minister now in his own domain!" She waved a satiric hand at the image of Louis le Grand carved all over the handsome woodwork. "Behold! It is under the very eyes

of despotism that we shall work to create a free State. And you," she said, turning to the gaping *bonne*, "shall now discover what it is like to live in a palace. My poor Fleury!" She patted her arm. "You are doomed to disappointment. We shall live here as simply as at Le Clos."

She was as good as her word. One of her visitors said in his memoirs of this period that the household reminded him of the Pennsylvania Quakers he had seen in America. Monsieur, so plainly dressed, Madame, in a simple frock and fichu of organdie and a laughing little girl, leaning over her mother's chair. Indeed, Roland's simplicity scandalized the court—or what was left of it—by his refusal to concede anything to the formalities of dress demanded by etiquette. When he first went to the Tuileries for presentation to the king, the master of ceremonies could not believe that this was the new minister.

"What, sir, no buckles?" he exclaimed with a glance at the ribbons in Roland's shoes. "No buckles," replied the minister with the gravity of one whose republican principles were at stake. The functionary tiptoed over to Dumouriez, the foreign minister, whose elegance was ever impeccable and whispered, "But, monsieur, no buckles on his shoes?" "Ah, monsieur!" laughed Dumouriez. "All is lost!" And he took his unsmiling colleague by the arm.

When Madame Roland learned of the incident she laughed and murmured that lackeys always believe the safety of an empire rests on etiquette. Yet

inwardly she winced. Her husband's stubborn neglect of the niceties of appearance did him no good. When she took him to task he pretended that he was in the spirit of the age. But look at Robespierre—a perfect dandy. Think of Buzot's fastidious dress! Slovenliness was only part and parcel of the ignorant mob which had forsworn knee breeches in favor of long trousers and in consequence had been called the *Sans-Culottes*. Roland was not only indifferent about dress, but about the impression he made. If he were going to hold office successfully, his wife would have to make his friends for him.

For this reason she decided to gather in to the ministry by means of a weekly dinner everyone of political importance. She had, however, added to her *ménage* only a cook and a *concierge*—the latter also drove her carriage—and consequently could manage but fifteen or twenty guests at a time. She therefore invited people in two groups. One consisted of the ministers and their assistants; the other of deputies, Girondist leaders, and personal friends. But to neither dinner were women invited. She followed Madame Pétion's example of having women only informally. The food was always in the simple tradition of the good *bourgeoisie*. There was one substantial course of meat and vegetables and salad served with crusty bread and a little wine. Madame herself served and Louis, the valet, passed the plates. The only brilliance of these reunions lay in the exchange of ideas among people so congenial

that even the most serious discussions were shot through with wit and laughter.

The present ministry had been accepted by the king because he thought these men the least hostile to him among the candidates presented. Dumouriez, indeed, the foreign minister, had been in the former army and was almost a figure of the old régime. The others were all Girondists selected by Brissot and Pierre Vergniaud. De Grave was minister of War, Lacoste of the Marine, and Etienne Clavière, long a friend of Brissot and co-author of his book on the American Revolution, was minister of Finance. The Rolands had wanted Bancal des Issarts for minister of Justice. But Bancal was never on the right spot at the right time and in his absence Vergniaud appointed Duranthon.

Of these only Clavière stood shoulder to shoulder with Roland. De Grave's line was somewhat oblique, in Madame Roland's opinion. Furthermore she considered Dumouriez, the foreign minister, far too much the wily courtier for comfort. She had seen this man, who was to become so notorious in the annals of treason, for the first time the night he had come with Brissot to announce Roland's appointment. Afterwards she had said, "So that is the famous Dumouriez! A false look and a loose mentality are his! Be on your guard with him!" But the warning seemed useless, so aloof was the foreign minister. He was one of the less regular guests at the department dinner.

But at best Marie enjoyed this official affair far less than the second, more general entertainment.

Then she was surrounded by close personal friends. She had, of course, counted upon Bosc for these occasions, but, except for brief calls, that young man wouldn't come near. And this despite Marie's most beguiling notes!

When Roland inquired the cause of such behavior, however, his wife was ready to explain. "Louis Bosc is too proud. Since this recent cut in salary he positively hasn't enough money to hire a cab, much less return our hospitality, and so he won't accept it. I do hope you can find him a better place in the near future." And Roland agreed that it was quite possible.

Indeed, the minister of the Interior discussed his every appointment and plan with "his half," as he called Marie. These consultations, the correspondence with which he entrusted her and all the arrangements for getting the right people invited every week were tasks assumed in addition to management of the house and the supervision of Eudora. Luckily she was a woman who handled details easily. She once wrote to Bosc that with a pair of servants she needed for the most meticulous housekeeping but two hours a day. With all her duties she always preserved a margin for personal relations. She managed to be at home often enough to receive such people as the old Bernards, who toddled over to see their niece in all her grandeur, Madame Trude, who still complained about the dreadful husband who once pestered Marie, and Sophie Grandchamps, with whom she was still trying to reconcile the hot-headed Bosc.

Oh, there were a thousand demands upon her time and energy! But she could meet them all. She loved every moment of it. She thoroughly enjoyed interviewing the streams of people who came at odd times to see the minister. Individuals she had known under such different circumstances were always turning up to make her say to herself, "Heavens! Is this really little Manon of the Pont-Neuf, here in the palace of the ministry helping to direct the affairs of the nation?" And then the wonder would be lost in the wish that she had more to do with directing affairs instead of working only through others. For then more might really be accomplished. There was far too much good time wasted everywhere.

Roland's accounts of the council meetings with the king shocked her profoundly. For with a million problems pressing for intelligent solution these men would spend an hour listening to the lively stories recounted by Dumouriez for the king's entertainment. They were very informal, these meetings. Louis would take the papers submitted by each of his ministers, look them over, give his comments, ask questions and then generally come to some superficial conclusion. The fact that the minister of the Interior had no criticism to make either of his colleagues or of his sovereign was thought by his wife under the circumstances an alarming symptom.

One day when Clavière had been lunching with them, Madame Roland exclaimed, "Heavens above! I never see you two set out for the council with such

fine confidence that I'm not afraid you will do something foolish!"

To which Roland rejoined, "Well, if Louis isn't an honest man he's the greatest scamp in the kingdom. Nobody can pretend like that."

"Oh, he may not be a scamp," she said. "I don't think the king a wicked man. But he has shown weakness and undependability at every point and I can't see how you can trust him so well. Remember that war has not yet been formally declared. When it is Louis will bear watching."

Although she shared the impulsive lack of reflection characteristic of her day, Madame Roland had a very keen sense of the gigantic task confronting the Girondists. They were no longer the party of attack. They were the party in power—with all the responsibilities of governing on their shoulders. Now they had to make their ideas concrete in acts. To hold authority over the provinces, regulate taxation, enforce the Constitution and undertake such progressive measures as the founding of schools and promoting of trade—here were projects sufficient to tax the best intellects. But when you add the necessity of keeping the wild extremists at bay and the vast problem of the war you have a staggering program in outline.

Where were the men big enough to carry it through? Madame Roland looked about her in despair. She saw men who were honest, idealistic, scrupulous, zealous. But their lack of experience and discipline made them ineffective. They thought everything could be accomplished by talking!

These were the very best of them, like Brissot. As for the ranks, they were incorrigibly easy-going. The woman who could not overlook the faults of her own child was fatally clear-sighted in her estimate of her friends. The quality doomed her to a constant undercurrent of impatience and depression.

She said to Roland one day, when he had to admit that nothing had been accomplished at the council meeting: "I would rather see you employ three hours in solitary meditation on the great interests of the State than spend them in idle chat."

He sat down beside her desk in silence. Madame Roland had taken for her work-room, where she wrote her letters and held private interviews, a tiny little *salon* which opened into the larger apartment of the minister. It was here that the real policies of the department were settled. How the tables had turned! The woman who used to quiver at her bridegroom's least displeasure had become the mentor who held him up to stern standards of accomplishment.

Now, as if to justify his existence in his wife's eyes, Roland produced a plan. It was to broadcast a bulletin of propaganda and of comment on passing events in such a form that it could be posted about Paris and mailed throughout the provinces. "His half" thought very well of the scheme. "And who should write the messages?" she asked. That was just what he wanted to discuss with her. In the end they decided to engage the literary member of the Girondist group in the Assembly, a young nov-

elist named Jean-Baptiste Louvet de Couvrai. It was a comment on the prevailing taste of the day that the libertine tales of this writer should have been admired by a woman like Madame Roland. But he was a witty and charming creature, always an asset at her dinner parties. After Louvet was put in charge of *The Sentinel*, as the publication was called, he became a devoted and admiring friend of the Rolands.

Yes, she succeeded in magnetizing almost everybody. But there was one person who resisted. She had no success with Robespierre. It was not that she did not try. When Roland first became minister she realized that this powerful Jacobin who so vehemently opposed the war and was therefore a dominant influence over the radical group both in his own club and in the Cordeliers, had either to be conquered or won over. Even before she came to the rue Neuf-des-Petits-Champs she had written Robespierre and had achieved one interview. But he was not a man who yielded one inch to feminine charm. As for the appeal of her arguments, it proved powerless. The deputy from Arras had his own vision and his own line. His self-confidence was impregnable. He did not need the support of the Girondists. In the end he meant to vanquish them. Hadn't he the extremists at his back? And weren't they beginning to control Paris?

It was the middle of April. Chestnut trees in the Tuileries gardens were beginning to bud. The arcades of the Palais-Royal swarmed gaily each night with people of every description from elegants

to hoboes. There were still aristocrats in Paris. The opera house near the Porte Saint-Martin, the theaters, large and small, could boast of crowded houses.

Not far from the Calonne mansion, the house of Madame de Staël, Necker's daughter and the future novelist, kept open a *salon* where conservatives flocked for comfort. The bored and lonely queen still received and the Princesse de Lamballes had come back to keep her company. Such were the broken bits of frosting which clung to a cake gone stale. But underneath the worms of discontent were hard at work.

Hard at work also were Camille Desmoulins and Jacques Hébert planning new deviltry to fill their scandalmonging journals, those papers hawked in the street which were the true forerunners of the yellow journals of the modern era. They sat, these editors, evening after evening planning and sipping cognac at the Café Procop on the square which is now the Place de l'Odéon. Round the corner at the Cordeliers Club Marat was hard at work, too, haranguing his followers. From back streets and crooked lanes they came to listen to him. Their faces were pinched and their hearts bitter. Willing were they to believe that the fellows who ran things now were no better than the aristocrats. What did they do? People were hungry and out of work and got no more help than before. If it weren't for friend Marat and that big Danton and Santerre, the brewer, leader of the Faubourg Saint-Antoine, the people would still have no voice. All the ministers could talk about was war.

And on the twentieth of April war was declared. The enemies were Francis the First, Emperor of Austria and the Holy Roman Empire, his allies of Poland and Prussia, and the French aristocrats whose cause they championed. Louis had signed the declaration. But the revolutionary government was far from sure he wanted it to triumph. However, the army marched off to the border and the ministry and Assembly took up the support of a campaign destined to continue under changing leadership for twenty-three years. For an instant, after the crisis of final decision was passed, the Girondists rested on their oars. True, Marat and Desmoulins howled predictions of failure after the departing troops. But they were in the minority. The followers of Brissot had high hopes. Madame Roland wrote to Buzot that all the ministers were wining and dining each other quite as if they were certain of the outcome.

That she herself had many reserves on the subject was felt by her associates. A writer who chronicled this period later reported that he told Madame Roland she was the only one in the entire group who retained her perspective. Said he, "I have dined with Clavière and de Grave and I find everyone with the air of believing they are in office for the rest of their lives. Their confidence and gaiety are amazing! You, madame, are the one exception. With no lack of *esprit* your eyes see farther than the moment. You are prepared for change."

His hostess, smiling, had replied with a sweep of her hand about the luxurious room. "Ah, yes! To

me this is but an inn!" She and Roland had kept their little apartment and she had no doubt that they would need it before the war progressed much farther.

The first news from the front was not good. The soldiers lacked faith in their generals. They feared that, backed by the king, the commanders might betray them to the enemy. Had not Marat in *L'Ami du Peuple* assured them that such was sure to be the case? Panic culminated horribly at Lille near the northern border in a stampede during which the general of one division was set upon and killed. News of this set Paris once more in an uproar of accusation. The government was blamed for a war which meant certain betrayal for the soldiers. De Grave, the war minister, was accused of plots and even his colleagues held him in suspicion. Brissot, who had to do something quickly, advised him to resign.

Conferences in the little workroom of Madame Roland had been numerous. Who was to be chosen to take the minister's place? The Rolands had a candidate who they knew would be acceptable to Brissot. They had, indeed, met him first at Lyons through the Girondist leader. This was Joseph Servan, a man of military experience, fervent patriotism, and an integrity above even mob suspicion. Both in Lyons and in Paris Madame Roland had seen much of this man and cherished for him a personal affection equal to her admiration of his ability. Vergniaud and Clavière supported the suggestion

and with the king's consent Joseph Servan entered the ministry.

Immediately he sent a note to Madame Roland thanking her for her share in his appointment, and she replied with joyous pen, "Yes, monsieur, I desired it, willed it." But happy as she was over having a close and trusted friend in the council of State, she was almost more delighted over another appointment which altered greatly for the better the fortunes of one of her satellites. Clavière had begun to reorganize the Post Office the last of April. He discussed at the ministry of the Interior the possible candidates for administrator-in-chief. Madame Roland with skilful arguments then presented the virtues and experience of Louis Bosc. Of course, he was known to the entire group and it was not hard to convince them that he was the very man for the place.

Thus it was that on the eleventh of May Bosc received a note in the familiar hand which had penned him so many letters of affection, condolence, and reprimand. "Whatever the hour when you receive this note come to see me today." Thus ran the imperious message. And when he was admitted to the little office off the *salon* Madame Roland told him the news. "Isn't it splendid?" she cried, clasping his hand warmly. "Oh, my dear friend, I know you will do excellent service for us in this office and it *is* very good for you, isn't it?" Then as very much moved, he stammered his thanks for her championship of him, she cut him short with an affectionate smile. "Dear Bosc, do me a

favor, will you? Mount the stairs to Eudora's sitting room and tell her how important you have become. She will be so pleased."

After this Monsieur Bosc d'Antic reappeared at Marie's dinners. They were even gayer and sometimes more elaborate these days. For everything looked promising and conferences were just big family parties. Marie always took care, except when left alone with quill and paper, to keep well in the background. One of her visitors has left to posterity this pen portrait of her: "I saw at Madame Roland's house many committees of ministers and the principal Girondists. One woman seemed a little out of place, but she did not mingle in the discussions. She kept herself most often at her desk, writing letters and usually seeming occupied with something else—although she lost not a word. Her modest dress took nothing from her grace and although her work was that of a man she adorned her merit with all the exterior charm of her sex."

For more than a fortnight the Girondists walked an untroubled way and Madame Roland was queen of all she surveyed. To what extent she was consulted about everything is evidenced by the fact that she was instrumental in Brissot's appointment of citizen Genêt to represent France in the United States. The one thing she feared was the influence of Louis Sixteenth upon his executive council. In the first place, she had no belief in the value of his judgment, nor did she trust his good faith. In the second place, she had her ear sufficiently to the ground to catch the murmurs of the extremists in

the Assembly and in the municipal government of Paris. She realized that if the ministers did not fight for republican rights and force the king to important decisions they would soon be accused of being his tools. Opposition to the war was vigorous. Fear had been instilled into the people. When word of defeat came from the front Paris was in panic. It behooved the ministry, therefore, to undertake some measure of protection for the city. And whether or not she first suggested it, she certainly gave her whole-hearted support to Joseph Servan's proposal to establish at Soissons, just north of Paris, an armed camp of twenty thousand men.

The measure was secretly discussed by Roland, Clavière, and Servan. They were not at all sure these days just where Dumouriez stood, but suspected him of making plays for the favor of both the king and Marie-Antoinette. Roland had criticized an appointment of the General's and thus had offended his vanity. In the end, however, Dumouriez agreed to the soundness of the proposition for an armed camp to protect Paris and it was submitted by the ministers to Louis. But the king would give them no decision. Neither would he sign the decree of the Assembly that those priests who would not take oath to support the Constitution should be banished from France. Doubtless the royal opposition, especially to the latter edict, was sincere. But it was judged by all but the conservatives to be another exhibition of faithlessness to the country.

Here then was a clear issue—the king's will

against Girondist judgment. In Madame Roland's mind temporizing had no place. She was willing to stake everything on an attempt to carry the proposals. Louis might dismiss his ministers. But what of it? Hadn't she said she considered Calonne's palace but an inn on the revolutionary roadside? Towards the last of May, therefore, she threw all her influence upon the members of the council to brook no more of the king's hesitation. In the end she had her way with them. Her husband and Servan decided to submit by letter a forcible demand for the king's signature to the two measures in question. The letter was written on the tenth of June and, although she never admitted it, it was generally known to be the work of Madame Roland. Next day the king received the harsh warning to conform or take the consequences.

That night before the weekly dinner a brief conference was held in Marie's cabinet. Even Brissot had managed to drop in for it. "The king will never accept this demand," said Roland. "I am certain that tomorrow the ministry will fall."

"Not Dumouriez or Lacoste or Duranthon," amended Madame Roland. "They are not involved so deeply in this particular contest."

"If half the ministry falls—the better half," said Pétion, "it will cause a riot among the people. I'm sure they want nothing so much as the armed camp."

"Should Roland, Clavière, and Servan be dismissed," added Brissot, "I shall see that the country knows exactly why."

It was with the suppressed excitement of threatened crisis that Madame Roland went about her duties next day. She went in the afternoon with Madame Pétion to see Madame Brissot. Hardly had she returned when Louis Lecoq, the valet, announced Joseph Servan.

He came swiftly across the spacious room, holding out both his hands. "Congratulate me!" he cried gaily, "I have the honor to be fired from office."

Marie replied in the same spirit: "Then my husband must be going to divide the honors and I am piqued that you should be the first. Sit down and tell me all about it."

Servan told her that when he was talking with the king in the morning the subject of the camp of guardsmen came up. Servan said that if His Majesty sincerely wished to oppose foreign armies it was absolutely necessary to have it. Upon this the royal back was turned in a fury of ill humor and at the very moment Dumouriez appeared bearing the portfolio of the minister of War. Already he had been appointed in Servan's place.

"Ah!" cried Marie indignantly, "Dumouriez has been playing a double game. But I am not surprised. He is not frank."

When Roland was apprised of the news he sent a message to each member of the cabinet except Dumouriez. They deliberated until far into the night and met again next morning at the ministry of the Marine. But no decision could be reached as to the means of checking the king's move. As they

were talking a messenger from the king arrived with letters of dismissal in his pocket.

Madame Roland was waiting in her writing room. She was quite prepared. And the moment she saw her husband's face with its mask of jauntiness she knew. "Well, I, too, am ousted," he said.

Marie went to him and placed her hands on his breast. "You have done well, my friend. Better that we lose our place than hold it at the expense of our duty." She turned then and pulled the bell to summon Louis. "We shall be packed and ready to leave tomorrow morning, my poor, dear, ex-minister. But we are not finished with this business yet."

Once more the scene had changed. The next evening at the apartment on the rue de la Harpe they were dining in a room which would hardly have held the table of the Calonne mansion. But they were by no means abandoned. Letters, messages, and visitors flew in and out of the door every moment. Marie consulted several friends about her next move and they all urged her on. As a result Roland betook himself to the Assembly and read to the deputies his letter to the king.

Questionable taste, perhaps, to reveal in public a private letter! Yet his doing so did everything in the world for Roland's prestige. The deputies saw in the document a fearless manifestation of patriotism and gave it a great ovation. They ordered that it be printed and distributed broadcast. As a consequence both Paris and the provinces rang with Roland's name and he became the hero of the

day. Brissot was delighted by the general protest against the dismissal of the ministers, and Lanthenas brought word to his friends that Danton and the Cordeliers Club were furious against the king. "The Commune will certainly rise in protest!" he cried.

The Commune of Paris and the Girondist party! To understand how ill assorted were such elements you must remember two things. First, that by the Constitution Paris had been put entirely outside the jurisdiction of the National Assembly and, second, that the elective government of the municipality was rapidly changing from liberal to radical. The city was divided into forty-eight sections which had local *commissaires* and two representatives each in the central council of Notables. In addition there was a directory. Pétion, who was mayor, now represented one of the few men in perfect sympathy with Brissot and the Girondists. Most of the municipal officers were exactly the kind of folk the intellectuals and idealists most scorned. They were the butchers, bakers, and candlestick makers who had risen just far enough above the mob to control the mob. Paris, thus organized, was always on the side of violence and the city even now threatened to dominate the National Assembly by force of its armed and vociferous crowds.

The Girondists were aware of this menace. Yet at this moment they were inclined to use the ferocity of the Commune to force the king's hand and to reëstablish the dismissed ministers. The national leaders believed that for once the mob was right.

They wanted them to rise in protest. What Brissot and the friends of Madame Roland did not face was that if they once condoned violence they would always have to condone it, that if they urged the mob on now they could never control it later.

All the deputies in the Assembly, however, were not so certain that the end justified the means. When they heard that the sections were organizing a petition to the king demanding that Roland, Servan, and Clavière be returned to office, the deputies asked: "But are the petitioners to be armed?"

That was the all-important question. An orderly request was one thing, violence another. From the Assembly sped a messenger to ask the intentions of the directory of the Commune. But when he returned, and before he could answer, Vergniaud rushed to the tribune of the Assembly and cried, "It is contrary to the laws for the national body to interfere with matters of the local police." It was true enough. But one day Vergniaud was bitterly to regret the fact. One day he was to lament that on this nineteenth of June he had not thrown the moral prestige of the Assembly into the balance, not of violence, but of peaceful and legal methods. His utterance was almost an invitation to riot. Certainly it was a complete casting aside of any responsibility of the national deputies for the acts of the Paris Commune. For such a precedent the Girondists were to pay dearly.

Despite Vergniaud's attempt to muzzle the messenger's report it was announced to the delegates. Petitioners were to carry arms and violence was an-

ticipated. True, Pétion, the mayor, was sending some National Guardsmen to keep order. Moreover, placards had been posted forbidding the assemblage of crowds. But these measures were but flimsy gestures and everybody knew it.

The morning of the twentieth of June began quietly enough. Roland went out with Monsieur Cauchois, the proprietor of the house, to see if trouble were brewing. Shortly afterwards Madame Roland received a letter from François Buzot and for an instant forgot all else. Indeed, she sat down to answer it and tell him Roland was now out of office, but found that for once she could not keep her mind on composition. She stood by the window, listening for sounds of that unrest she so profoundly felt throbbing through the sunlit city.

Suddenly she saw Lanthenas running towards her house. Eagerly she ran to the door and flung it open for him. "What is the news?" she cried in mounting excitement. "Is the protest then to amount to something?" Even before he spoke she knew things must be underway.

"The *faubourgs* are coming down!" he cried "Oh, my friend, it is beginning."

Her eyes dilated. "And Pétion? What is he doing?"

"I've been over twice this morning from his office to the Hôtel de Ville to get them to send a guard. He wants to keep out of this. He wants to be kept out by force. But there's no counting on those madmen. Bosc is on his way here. He says Comte Roederer told the deputies an hour ago that

an uprising was inevitable." Lanthenas looked at his companion searchingly. "You want that, don't you?"

Her gaze was steady. "The king must fall," she replied.

Hardly had Lanthenas left when Bosc arrived. "The petitioners are already marching about the Assembly hall," he told her. "Pikes, bayonets, banners, the Declaration of Rights, songs and threats—nothing is lacking! The Tuileries garden is one seething mass of ruffians and market women."

"Take me out!" she demanded. "I cannot stay here. Let us walk along the *quais*. We'll be out of the crowd there." And, overriding his protests, she donned hat and mantle and set forth with her unwilling escort.

Even as they reached the corner of the Louvre, threading their way among excited knots of people, they could hear the cheers and cries rocketing up on the other side of the Tuileries. "*Mon Dieu!*" murmured Bosc, "I hope there are guards at the gate."

But there were not. When Santerre, the brewer, at the head of his mob demanded that the gates be opened, the porter knew not how to refuse. Once within the barriers nothing could stop the rush. Unchecked, the crowd took its headlong way through the great halls, up the stairs and into the private chambers. As they went they overturned chairs, smashed vases, and pocketed such small objects as snuff boxes, candlesticks, spoons, hand mirrors, and toilet articles. At last the bawling, shrieking ruf-

fians reached the king's room. There, standing on a chair that he might be seen by all, he calmly faced his visitors. Around him was a group of guardsmen who commanded: "Citizens, respect your king!"

Legendre, the butcher and loyal Cordelier, was spokesmen. "Sir," he shouted, "it is your business to listen to us. You are a traitor. You have always deceived us. You still deceive us. Take care; the measure is full; the people are tired of being your plaything."

Roars of approval from the roomful were caught up by those outside. Marie and Bosc could hear them on the *quai*. "Down with the Veto! Give us back the patriotic ministers!"

"Do you hear?" Marie caught Bosc's arm. "There speaks the will of the people!"

At this moment a man's figure appeared sneaking around the edge of the distant palace wall. As he reached the *quais* he began to run—a man without hat or coat, fleeing as if in mortal terror. Almost within arm's reach of Bosc, the runner tripped on a stone and fell full length. When he sat up Madame Roland, her companion, and several others had closed in around him.

"Oh, *mon Dieu!*" he gasped. "The dirty mob! Oh, my master, my mistress!" His bloodshot eyes, terrible in his dust-streaked face, rolled around upon Bosc. "You, a man? And you let such things happen to your king? They are smashing everything. They've clapped a filthy red bonnet on His Majesty and half terrified to death Monsieur le

Dauphin. And nobody protests! Nobody comes to help!" He scrambled to his feet and stood there gasping. Suddenly he shook a trembling fist at Madame Roland. "How would you like a mob to ruin your house and frighten your children into fits? Why do you stand here? Why don't you call the troops?" With a frightful glare of hatred at the group about him, the man suddenly took to his heels again and was soon lost in the scattered crowd.

As he did so, a group of the rioters appeared in the distance moving toward the Pont-Royal. The sound of their singing and yelling came faintly along the river's edge. Marie could see them brandishing their pikes. "Well?" said Bosc as they turned homeward. "You have seen the Paris mob at work—this time for a good cause. But suppose they turned against you, what then?" Madame Roland did not answer. She was thinking of what the king's servant had said to her. Bosc shook his head. "The people will not always rise to defend the right!" he said prophetically.

What was the result of June twentieth's insurrection? Further humiliation of the monarch, further aggrandizement of the Commune which had staged it. Brissot's gain was not immediate. For Louis did not yield. He did not invite his ministers to return. Neither did he sign the edicts in question. He demanded the suspension of Pétion for failure to protect the palace and the sovereign. But Pétion was exonerated before the Assembly. And, sustained by the anti-monarchical sentiment demonstrated by the riot, the Girondists now boldly

adopted a program which had for its goal the dethroning of the king. To push it they gladly welcomed the support of Danton and the Cordeliers. When La Fayette demanded of the deputies punishment for the instigators of the revolt he was greeted by an uproar of antagonism.

Meanwhile reverses on the battle line continued without change for the better. Foreign armies were gaining and nervous apprehension in the capital mounted day by day. The armed camp was established without Louis' sanction. Dumouriez resigned his office, resumed his generalship, and went out to join the army at the front. The Assembly passed a decree called "The Country is in Danger" to arouse resistance and call for volunteers. And then as if to justify Brissot's hopes that the war would reveal the king's treason came a manifesto from the Duke of Brunswick, the head of the allied armies. Taking the tone of a conqueror towards an already vanquished people, the general threatened the total destruction of Paris should further humiliation be heaped upon the king. Paris was in a fury.

Excitement was the very breath of those patriots who met in the yellow drawing room on the rue de la Harpe. Day after day members of the clan foregathered there. Not one amongst them but was certain that Brunswick's manifesto proved his secret alliance with Louis Sixteenth. Roland and Clavière were the only ones who maintained, as a leftover from the spirit of the council meetings, that the king was not completely on the side of the Prussians.

"Louis," said they, "probably hopes the foreign-

ers will win for the sake of Antoinette and his own deliverance. But he is a Frenchman after all. At heart he would hate to see his country run over by people of alien blood."

No one agreed with this. "At any rate the manifesto has helped the cause. Enrollments for the army increase by hundreds and everybody looks to the dethronement of the king."

The man who voiced this opinion was a newcomer to the capital. He was an ardent patriot from Marseilles and his name was Barbaroux. He had long been in communication from that city with the minister of the Interior and Marie had read and replied to his letters. The dignity and maturity of their tone had prepared her for a man of middle years. But here was a young stripling and the handsomest creature Madame Roland had ever seen. She called him Antinous and from the first encounter they became devoted friends. He and she and Joseph Servan would spend hours over maps, discussing the war and the centers of resistance quite as if they constituted the general staff of the army.

Barbaroux said to her one day: "The National Guard of Marseilles is coming up to Paris. If things go as we expect you may anticipate the fall of the monarchy."

What did this mean? Another insurrection? Madame Roland feared to ask. But she, like everyone else in the capital, was thrilled to the soul by the entrance of the battalion from Marseilles. For on their lips sounded for the first time that electrifying song which was to be named after them and be-

come the national anthem of France. Recently composed for the army of the Rhine by Rouget de Lisle in his camp at Strasbourg, the hymn was chanted with passionate fervor as the soldiers from Marseilles swung along the Paris streets.

"*Allons enfants de la patrie!*" On the steps of the Hôtel de Ville Marie stood with her husband and Lanthenas to look over the heads of the crowd. "*Mon Dieu*, what a song!" she cried, the tears coursing down her cheeks. Everyone in the street was taking up the refrain, "*Marchons, citoyens! Formez vos bataillons!*" It was the very epitome of patriotism. Let them come, the Prussians, and shake the very gates of the nation! Never would Frenchmen yield—not with that lyric cry of defiance to hurl before them! The crowd rushed after the singing soldiers. "Down with tyrants! *Vive la Liberté!*" they shouted.

After this came August tenth—the day when the monarchy fell. Brissot had foreshadowed it. He had accused the king of intrigue before the Assembly. Pétion and Vergniaud had scattered the seed. Madame Roland had urged them on. In a letter to Brissot written on the thirty-first of July she had accused the party of temporizing. Furious because Guadet and Vergniaud, in noble speeches of great power, had left open the door to royal coöperation, she called upon Brissot to be strong for the moment of crisis. To everyone she kept repeating her own words to Lanthenas, "The king must fall." But it was the Commune who brought him down.

Robespierre, Danton, Marat, and the journalists

who sowed the whirlwind—these were the men who alone could rouse the people. Meetings in the sections, caricatures and headlines, gusts of fear blown about dingy courts and alleyways. There was treachery at the court, the country was handed over to the enemy; down with the king—that was what the people heard from their leaders and what they repeated in wineshops and cellars from the Marais to Saint-Germaine-des-Prés. Forty-eight sections and all but one unanimous. One great petition laid before the Assembly to demand a kingless France. If the Assembly had not proclaimed the dethronement by the evening of August ninth—so said the petitioners—the people themselves would carry out justice.

Here then was the open challenge from the Commune to the representatives of the nation. By the Constitution of 1791 Paris was outside the jurisdiction of the Assembly. Now it was to be determined whether the Assembly was in the power of the Commune. But the issue was confused by the agreement at that moment between the radicals of the municipality and the Girondist leaders. The coalition was strong enough to paralyze the action of those others who hated to submit to the dictates of the Paris mob. It silenced the delegates who still hoped against hope that the king might take his place as the head of the nation. And so the petitioners remained unanswered. Unwilling to yield, unable to withstand, the Assembly let the day and evening of August ninth pass without decision. With those hours passed forever the final authority of the na-

tional body. From now on the Commune's word was law. And in the dead of night the fatal tocsin began to sound.

Madame Roland heard it. She was with her husband and Bancal des Issarts, who was again in Paris. At the sound she rushed to the window and looked out. "What is happening?" she cried. "We must find out." Bancal offered to go to Pétion's office for news. It seemed hours until he returned.

"Pétion is not there," reported Bancal breathlessly. "The king sent for him and he has not returned. They say he is held at the Tuileries as a hostage. But the Hôtel de Ville is in an uproar. The extremists have overthrown the city government. A directory of insurrection is sitting in place of the legal body. Special meetings of the sections were called to put these new men in office. Oh, my friends, this time the Commune has got out of all bounds. Brissot will never again be as powerful as Marat and Danton."

There was little sleep for the Rolands that night. At dawn the alarm bells once more rang out. A few hours later Marie insisted that they go out to reconnoiter. Across the bridge they began to pass several deputies walking slowly toward the Assembly hall, and when they met Guadet they stopped to ask him what was going to happen.

"No one knows," the deputy replied anxiously. "When the Assembly sent yesterday to ask Pétion whether law and order would be preserved the mayor replied, 'No measure exists which can guarantee tranquillity!' Look, there's an indication! The

wildest soldiers in France are taking a hand." Marie whirled around. Behind her, swinging across the Pont-Neuf came the battalion from Marseilles. From the Cordeliers Club they were marching straight to the Tuileries.

It was at this very moment that within that palace the Comte Roederer was urging the king to flee. Closeted with Louis and Marie-Antoinette, he declared their peril imminent. "It will be worse than the twentieth of June," he cried. "Sire, the *faubourgs* are on the march!"

The queen, loth to recoil before the mob, shook her head stubbornly. Louis went to the window and looked out. "I have not seen many people on the Place Carrousel," he said.

"They are massing on the *quais* and on the avenue Saint-Honoré, massing by the thousands," cried Roederer, beside himself with alarm. "Sire, you haven't five minutes to lose. You have no protection here but a handful of Swiss Guards."

Another messenger stood at the door. "The crowds are gathering before the Assembly, Your Majesties, it is time to flee!"

At last the royal family was persuaded. Madame Elizabeth, the children, the king and queen—there they stood in the hall as they had on the night of the fatal flight to Varennes. "We will go to the Assembly and ask for the protection of the deputies," said Louis in a dull voice. The queen came to whisper in his ear: "It may not be for long. Brunswick may yet triumph and come to rescue us." Slowly they walked from their palace, this group

which so short a time ago had possessed the glamour, the prestige, the absolute power of monarchy. The little Dauphin kicked up the golden leaves which lay thick upon the grass. "The leaves fall early this year," mused Louis. He spoke as one in a dream.

On the steps of the Assembly hall a deputation awaited them and the crowd pressed close, curious and menacing. But the guards passed them safely through, followed by the jeers and invectives of the populace. The delegates rose respectfully. One member showed the royal visitors to seats in the empty press box near the speakers' platform. Hardly had they reached them when the sound of cannon roared across the gardens. "Gentlemen," said the king, "I have come here to prevent a great crime. I think I cannot be safer than in your midst."

Vergniaud was presiding on the tribune. "Your Majesty may count on our firmness," he replied. "The National Assembly has sworn to die in defense of the constitutional authorities." It was for such smooth glibness that Madame Roland distrusted this gifted being.

She was walking homewards now, this woman who had played her part in launching August tenth. Roland would not let her get closer to the scene. Across the city they heard now more frequently the sound of guns. "Let us hope they spare the king's person," cried Roland in great uneasiness. "The Swiss Guards must be defending the palace."

And so they were. Left alone in the Tuileries, without a leader, without orders, but faithful to

their duty, the brave mercenaries were fighting to a man. The firing of the Marseillais was returned. The crowd, wild with rage and terror, surged about the streets with screams and battle cries, now advancing, now retreating. Pikes were brandished. They rushed the gates and then fled once more before a volley of musketry from the palace windows and stairways.

From a nearby vantage point a short, slender young man with the beautiful features of the Corsican was watching the scene with critical contempt. Give him three years and he will send what Carlyle called "a whiff of grapeshot" to disperse the silly mob and restore order. Give him twelve years of successful generalship and he will be Emperor of France.

Now the floor of the Assembly hall shook and trembled with the sound of guns. Louis turned pale with distress. "There must be no bloodshed," he murmured and sent a note to the captain of the Swiss Guards telling him to cease firing on the people. Thereupon the Marseillais, in the act of beating a retreat, rushed forward once more and drove the Guards out of the court, down the riding alley toward the Assembly hall. Those who could not escape were killed. Those who remained to fight in the palace perished to a man.

Then came the rush upon the Tuileries. This time it was not pillage, but devastation. The crowd, bent on destroying every tangible evidence of monarchy, smashed and trampled underfoot everything they saw. Out of the great windows red bonnets

protruded. Demoniac yells sounded through the empty halls. Such was the insurrection of August tenth, staged by the Commune, countenanced by the Girondists, carried to success by Barbaroux's battalion. Before the mob had left the palace the news was brought to Madame Roland that she had got her wish. The king had fallen, indeed.

She was exultant. She thought the revolution was over. She did not realize the struggle with the Commune had but just begun. For though the Girondists profited by the event, it was the Commune that claimed the victory. That very day they sent a deputation to the Assembly to announce the triumph as their own. Georges-Jacques Danton was the leader of it.

Mounting the tribune he said to the Assembly: "The people who send us to you have instructed us to declare that they believe you always worthy of their confidence, but that they recognize no other judge of the extraordinary measures to which necessity has forced them to resort but the assembled French people, their sovereign and yours."

The reign of Louis Sixteenth was over. The royal family, at first sheltered in the convent of the Feuillants, were later escorted under heavy guard to the Luxembourg palace. The Assembly voted the deposition of the king and approval of the acts of the Commune. Immediately Robespierre demanded a decree disbanding the Assembly and the election by popular suffrage of a National Convention for the French Republic. At the end of the long, catastrophic day the fallen ministers were

THE PONT-NEUF AND THE CITE IN THE 18TH CENTURY

given back their portfolios—Servan, Clavière, and Roland de la Platière.

Once again the most powerful woman in Paris! Once again mistress of the beautiful mansion! The king deposed, the Republic declared, the Girondists in power—what drop was lacking to Madame Roland's cup of destiny? She raised it high and pledged herself to liberty. Before two days had passed she was hard at work.

A note arrived from Brissot: "I am free now and at the command of Madame Roland. I send her for her husband and Lanthenas a list of patriots to place." Lanthenas was already at the ministry. Roland had appointed him at once head of one of the departments of the Interior. Another friend called to help guide its fortunes was Champagneux from Lyons. How good it was to see him once more, to know that whatever was put in his hands would be well done. It was a close community that ran the Ship of State these days. With one exception! Danton was made minister of Justice. Madame Roland protested, but in vain. Had not Danton helped establish the Republic? She had rejoiced in his services, she must accept the need of rewarding him.

Every historian of the period has quoted the pen portrait she left of this man. "I watched that repellant and atrocious face. I have never seen anything which so perfectly embodied excess of brutal passions and the most astonishing audacity, half-veiled by an air of great joviality, an affectation of candor, a sort of cordiality. My imagination al-

ways sees those who impress me in the action which best suits their character. I often pictured Danton, poignard in hand, exciting by voice and gesture a troup of assassins more timid or less ferocious than he."

Never had she had such a guest at her table. Yet not only must Danton be invited to the weekly dinners which she promptly instituted again. He often dropped in at other times to ask if he might take potluck with the family or came lounging into her room in the afternoon with his satellite, Fabre d'Églantine. Danton was sounding her, she felt. In turn, she sounded him one day. "Do you know that I have never laid eyes on Marat? Won't you bring him here some afternoon?" In her own mind she added, "One really must know the monsters in one's path." But Danton refused to be the medium between Beauty and the Beast.

Oh, Danton was in deep with Marat and Desmoulins and that Hébert who published the horrible *Père Duchesne*—she knew it. She felt him as an enemy to republicanism as she conceived it. But what Madame Roland did not know was that in choosing a mark for her implacable hatred of ruthless and bloodthirsty methods she should have fixed, not upon Danton, but upon Robespierre, now called by his admirers, "The Incorruptible." She almost thought him deserving of the name. Because Robespierre was detached, hard-working, free from greed and dishonesty about money, she could never realize that boundless lust for power which in the end was to victimize them all. For the moment,

however, he was biding his time, the Commune was quiet, and the great decision concerning the fate of the king which was to strain men's hearts awaited the meeting of the new National Convention.

For the remaining three weeks of August, therefore, Madame Roland had her day of power untroubled by disaster. She entertained and was entertained. A distinguished man of politics gave her a gay dinner at one of the delightful little restaurants in the Bois. She attended the opera in the box which was part of the paraphernalia of ministerial privilege. Her small circle of ardent friends drew even closer and her circle of admirers considerably widened. One of them has left this impression of her:

> Her hair, her eyes and her head were of remarkable beauty. Her complexion delicate with a freshness and tint, which combined with her air of candor, made her very youthful. I did not in the least find in her Parisian elegance. But that is not to say that she was awkward, because what is simple and natural couldn't lack grace. She spoke well, too well. Her nature was too perfect. Wit, good-sense, taste in expression, adroit reasoning, naïve grace—such were the attributes revealed in her conversation and the whole was given piquancy by the flash of her white teeth and the curve of her dewy lips.

In the beautiful rooms where Madame Roland held her coterie were often to be found these days men whose interests were not confined to politics. There was a noted geographer, Edmonde Mentelle, who was later to help Roland's wife when she needed help the most, and an artist named Pasquier

who painted one of the three most authentic existing portraits of Madame Roland. The director of the Jardin des Plantes dined with them and Dulaure, editor of that dignified and honest journal, *The Thermometer of the Day*. Yes, it was for this Madame Roland had cultivated her mind, her social grace, her personality—three perfect weeks of leadership!

Signs of storm, but only signs, appeared by the middle of August on the Girondist horizon. For one thing, the Jacobins were swinging away from Brissot, toward the Left, toward Robespierre. For another, Danton got very much the best of Roland at the Council. It appeared that a most important commission was to be appointed to go from Paris to all the provinces. Their duties were to educate people in their new responsibilities of republican government and prepare further defense against the war. Plainly it was the right of the minister of the Interior to appoint the commission. Nevertheless, Danton, with good-humored but bullying zeal, cried: "Oh, no, I'll take charge of that. The Commune will afford excellent patriots." Next day he slapped down before Roland all the papers made out for individual appointments.

"But surely you didn't sign them?" asked Madame Roland aghast, when her husband was fuming over the incident. "Don't you realize that now it is not the Council, but Danton who is represented throughout France? Ignorant blow-hards who understand nothing but how to agitate unrest! Danton pays them from the Council and they will do

anything he commands! Oh, he has outwitted you! You have made a terrible mistake." She wrung her hands in despair.

Toward the end of August the portents of trouble for the Girondists became unmistakable. They hung over the north where the armies were being pushed steadily back by the enemy. Dumouriez was general-in-chief now. His backer at the Council was Danton. For with Roland and Servan he had never been friendly. Danton proposed by way of supporting the general at home that strong measures should be taken against possible traitors. His tyrannous proposition giving the Commune power to search private houses and arrest suspected persons was, in spite of Roland's protest, voted by the Assembly. It was a body blow to Brissot. For that party leader had an extraordinary committee of his own authorized to handle critical situations and it was the great Girondist weapon over the municipality.

It was terror which defeated Brissot. It was terror which gave the extremists and the Commune the whip hand over the Council and the Assembly. Carefully stimulated by Marat, Desmoulins, and Hébert, fear of treachery and of foreign armies dominated not only the populace, but even the more intelligent elements throughout the country. Marat urged the newly enlisted soldiers not to set off for the border until they had first massacred everybody not known to be patriots. Panic turned next against those priests who refused to take the Constitutional oath. The Assembly had already voted to banish them.

Now steps were taken toward their deportation. They were gathered into convents as a first move towards exile. Several hundred of the faithful were herded together like sheep—bishops, abbots, monks, many of them scholars and aristocrats, all of them men of profound convictions.

The Girondists, who were doing all they could to stabilize the public mind by means of such publications as Brissot's paper and Roland's *Sentinel* prepared by Louvet, were thrown into a state of fury and despair by what Marat now suggested in *The People's Friend*. The monster declared that since the priests and suspected persons might be judged innocent when they came up for trial, it was safer and surer to massacre them all in their places of confinement. Most of the party were comfortably certain that it was just Marat's extravagance, but a few like Madame Roland were beginning to listen to those warnings which told them that with such advisers almost anything might happen. One evening, however, they all were obliged to listen.

It was one of the last days of August in the year of 1792. In the shadowy coolness which made the great *salon* at the ministry so grateful in the late afternoon, the guests who had been invited to the informal dinner lingered on. At a table near the window Louis Bosc was teaching Eudora Roland how to play *piquet* and on each side of him Lanthenas and Champagneux were interjecting bantering advice. Beside the great fireplace, now filled with a huge vase of *ajouc d'or*, were seated a group of deputies and officials deep in a discus-

sion of the war. Roland, standing beside them, strolled over to his wife's desk where she sat talking to the handsome Barbaroux.

As he approached he heard her say in a low tone: "Danton has ceased coming to see me. Can you explain that?"

"Perhaps I can," said Roland. "I have refused him the money he wanted. Danton thought that the two million assigned the Executive Council by the Assembly should be spent by each minister exactly as he thought best, instead of for a common purpose, strictly accounted for. When, after denying him myself, I discovered that he'd got thousands of pounds from the other ministers, I asked him for a memorandum of his expenditures. But all I received was an angry look."

Madame Roland's eyes flashed. "With that money he is arming the mob and paying spies. He holds a perfect school of crime. The robberies that go on are absolutely disgraceful. What's more I feel that Danton is preparing some devilish surprise. This terrific power of search for suspected persons will be used for a daring *coup*, mark my words."

Across the beautiful features of Barbaroux's sunny young face passed a shadow. "It's strange the way the Jacobin Club is changing. Once Brissot dominated it. Now it's getting to be more like the Cordeliers day by day. It's almost as if the memberships were fused. Danton and Robespierre have the entire crowd at their heels. It's they who now correspond with provincial clubs and issue orders. They're beginning to govern the country."

Madame Roland rose restlessly and crossed the room to the group near the window. Whenever she realized that control was slipping from the hands she trusted she liked to talk with Champagneux. No irresponsible frivolity deflected his earnestness and industry. He turned to her now with his air of being ready for whatever she asked. But before she could speak Joseph Servan left the conference by the mantelpiece and joined her.

"I want to ask you for the hundredth time," said he, "if you think Dumouriez will be able to check the advance of the allied armies. If they get much nearer Paris we'll have a terrible panic here."

Madame Roland trusted Servan with all her heart, but she was always a little dismayed by his constant display of nervousness. That it was due to his delicate state of health made her fear the strain would prove too much for him. Now she spoke with all the reassurance at her command. "I think Dumouriez very gifted and very determined to win and I am absolutely certain that he will. Give him all the support you can! He needs it now and is sure to deserve it later. As a man of politics Dumouriez is not to be trusted, but as a general he is worthy of every confidence."

As Servan threw her a grateful look, Champagneux said, "If only the fortunes of war turn for the better our situation will be excellent. The departments are well organized and plans for a true republic sound—especially if good men are elected to the new assembly. Don't you think so, madame? We have had a wonderful three weeks of it."

Yes, she thought, if only Buzot had been there to share it all. Before she could make reply, however, her glance was drawn out the window where across the court she saw the outer gate swing open. A *fiacre* passed in, rattled over the cobblestones, and drew up at the porch. Simultaneously Bosc and Madame Roland recognized the man who jumped hastily out of it and said with one breath, "Why it's Pétion! What has happened now?"

Even as she asked the question she had a prevision of disaster. But still she could not guess that the warning Pétion came to bring was only a hint of such an eruption of horrors as might have issued out of Hell itself. Madame Roland's days of peaceful triumph had, indeed, been "wonderful," but they were over.

Chapter Seven

IN ANOTHER instant the mayor of Paris was in the room. His aspect startled them all. So did his glance which traveled from face to face as if to satisfy himself that no one was present before whom he could not speak freely. Madame Roland noted with a flash of relief that Marguerite Fleury had entered the *salon* and was taking Eudora away.

Pétion took a step forward and everyone pressed about him. "I have come to warn you," he said in a low tone. "The Commune is astir again. To-night they are posting up notices of a house-to-house search. Everyone is asked to remain at home tomorrow and business is to be suspended. What it means I cannot determine. I am always the last to be told of the plans made by the municipality."

"A house-to-house search!" cried Barbaroux. "And what is to be the mark of a suspicious person?"

"The possession of arms unauthorized by the Directorate and absence from one's own domicile. For God's sake take care tomorrow, all of you! It is the day when the Commune will deal with its enemies and by night the prisons will be full!" Then, with a despairing and portentous gesture, he was gone.

Madame Roland, with her obsession concerning

the source of all evil, besought her friends to challenge Danton's connection with this business. But the Assembly had a surer instinct. It was of Robespierre they demanded an explanation of the illegal committee still sitting at the Hôtel de Ville and of the acts of terror it committed. But now "The Incorruptible" felt strong enough to defy that body and, refusing to appear, replied by a manifesto which justified the Commune's every act. "What we have done the people have sanctioned," it read. "If you strike us, strike also the people who made the revolution of July fourteenth and August tenth and who will maintain it in spite of all the intriguers who hide under the mask of patriotism."

Bancal des Issarts had been right. Defended by Danton and Robespierre, the Commune had got far beyond Brissot's control. How could he rouse the Assembly to resent contemplated acts of violence now after crushing down protest against the armed petitioners of August tenth? Moreover, with September first came news from the front of such grave import that it seemed as if Fate were handing to the terrorists the very best excuse for playing upon the popular fear of treachery. Verdun had fallen, the last stronghold between the enemy and Paris!

Madame Roland did not hear the news that morning at the ministry. She had ordered the carriage at ten to drive Eudora and Mademoiselle Mignot, the new governess, out to order shoes for those active, small feet. In the back of her mind persisted the thought, "I'd better do my buying now while I can, before anything befalls us all." But

she gave no hint of dark undercurrents and as they drove along responded gaily to the child's comments.

Suddenly, however, came a great booming roar which made the horses rear and Eudora clutch her arm frantically. "Oh, *maman*, what was that? Why are they firing guns?"

In the act of turning into the rue Saint-Honoré, the carriage stopped at the curb and Henri, the coachman-*concierge*, leaned down to shout at a hurried passer-by "Why the guns, monsieur? Is it another riot?"

The man looked back, returned and stared upwards. "You haven't heard? Why, Verdun's fallen. The Prussian dogs are coming! What can stop them now?" Then on he ran.

"They'll *not* come!" stoutly asserted Eudora's mother, smiling down upon her quivering face. "Frenchmen will sing the hymn of the Marseillais and blow them all in bits. Drive on, Henri, the Prussians won't be here today, at least." And then her heart grew cold. For there before the church of Saint-Roch hung a black flag, the flag of danger and despair.

When Madame Roland returned to the ministry she found Servan and her husband closeted together, planning reinforcements, speeding messages. "Don't let the poison of fear enter your hearts!" she told them, looking invincible. "The Prussians will get no farther. I am certain of it. My poor Servan, you look like death. You must have a glass of wine

before lunch." She pulled the bell, then sat down at the council table.

Lanthenas came in as luncheon was announced.

"I have a piece of news," he said. "The Commune has called a mass meeting of all citizens tomorrow on the Champ-de-Mars. Danton is to address the crowd. Everyone will go, for everyone is terrified. I never saw such panic. It's no wonder, really, that the Commune talks of treachery—it seems so strange the foreigners have won." His three friends stared. Was this young man becoming a Dantonist?

The next day was Sunday, September second. At five o'clock in the afternoon Marie Roland was alone at work on papers and reports within her little cabinet. Suddenly she raised her head to listen. A great shouting had arisen in the court before the house. Hastening to the *salon* she glanced out the window and what she saw was calculated to strike terror to the heart of any woman. Gathered about the porch was a crowd of two hundred revolutionists, the ragged *Sans-Culottes*. With red caps pulled over matted hair, shirts open at brawny throats, clubs and pikes in the hands of some, their ferocious glances rolling this way and that, they stood shouting for admission. "We must see the minister! Open! We wish to speak to Roland!"

It was the same type of afternoon call which had been made upon the Tuileries. Did Madame Roland recall for an instant that this was what Marie-Antoinette had faced on the twentieth of June? At any rate before this array of brute force she also felt a truly royal scorn.

Louis's white face appeared at the portières. "*Mon Dieu*, madame, what shall we do?" he cried, beside himself with terror. "The *concierge* has told them monsieur has been out since four o'clock. He commands them to go away, but they insist on coming in. Do they mean to kill us all and wreck the house?"

"Tell the *concierge*," said Marie calmly, "to invite ten of them to come in and speak to me here."

Louis wrung his hands. "*Morbleu*, madame! You are alone! It is suicide! They'll run you through!" Then as she repeated, "Go!" he flung up both hands in horror and vanished.

In another moment the small figure there in the shining, empty room was confronted by a group of brigands wilder than nightmare's fancy. The mirrored panels reflected dark faces, swaggering shoulders, and filled the room with images of terror.

"What is it you wish of the minister? Since he is out I shall have to answer for him." Perfectly matter-of-fact, her tone.

"Arms!" they shouted with one voice. One of the group advanced a step: "We are good citizens, about to start for Verdun to smash the dirty Prussian dogs. We lack arms and come to get them. We want to see the minister."

"But there are no arms here. The minister of the Interior has none at his disposition. You must go to the War department for your equipment."

"We've been there!" bawled the leader. "And they told us they had none. All the ministers are traitors. We want to see Roland, do you hear?"

The group pressed forward with a growl. A saber rattled on the polished floor.

The proud head with its chestnut curls lifted even higher. The voice took on a finer frosting of politeness. "I regret exceedingly that the minister is out. He would convince you that he is powerless to help. Come with me, if you like, and visit every part of the house! You will find arms nowhere. There could be none in this department. Were I in your place I should try once more at the War office. But if you must see Roland you will find him at the ministry of the Marine. The entire executive council is assembled there."

So much crisp language puzzled them. The leader turned back to his fellows with a shrug. They hesitated. For an instant it looked as though they would rush upon the woman who opposed their fury. But her unwavering, candid gaze reduced their bluster to a low grumble of defeat. Out they went with noisy tramp of feet.

Quickly Madame Roland stepped to the balcony. A shout of rage from the crowd greeted the empty-handed ten. One coatless, ragged wretch, waving his saber, drew off and shouted up, "*A bas les ministres!* They are traitors to a man!" Once more the group wavered toward attack. But one of the ten spokesmen now beat his drum in signal of retreat and with imprecations and hoarse cries they moved toward the gate. Then two of them suddenly turned, dashed up the porch and came back with the *concierge* between them, his fat legs paralyzed with fear.

Instantly Marie fled up the stairs to her room, snatched bonnet and cape from the wardrobe, and ran down to the door. "Quick!" she cried to the half-fainting Louis. "Get me a carriage and then close the gates! I am going to the ministry of the Marine to warn monsieur."

As the valet, obeying without question, put her into the carriage he had summoned, he said, "*Mon Dieu*, madame, will they murder poor Henri?"

"Not they! Courage, my friend! They'll let him go, I'm sure."

At the Council Madame Roland found all assembled, but the meeting not yet called. Briefly she told of the visitation at the ministry. Roland turned pale as death. The others listened to her in astonishment, applauded her courage, assured her the incident was no more than it appeared. Servan said: "Just another case of the wild patriotism aroused by Verdun's loss! Hundreds of volunteers are leaving for the front and naturally want arms."

"Then you think that Danton had nothing to do with this?" Her voice was casual and she accepted without protest her friends' unanimous denial. Returning home she found the *concierge*, half dead with terror and exhaustion. The *Sans-Culottes* had dragged him for a mile and then had let him go.

Ah! There was a reason for the appearance of the mob before her door, she knew it. But before she could investigate, the entire significance of the incident dwindled for her almost to forgetfulness. It disappeared beneath the weight of abominations which cried to Heaven for vengeance. Not in vain

had Marat penned his bloody paragraphs, nor Danton shouted at the Champ-de-Mars that traitors in the capital had sent aid to the advancing enemy. Robespierre's hand did not falter when in secret he jerked the puppet populace. Between them these men achieved on the September second a Witches' Sabbath which Frenchmen still tremble to remember.

Monday at midday Madame Roland, anxious for news from the front, dropped her hesitating quill, pushed back her papers, and went out to see if her husband had brought back any word from the Assembly. But it was Louvet, editor of the department bulletins, whom she met in the corridor.

"My God, madame!" he cried, seizing her arm as if unaware of what he did. "Murder is being done! Murder—and no one stops it! The mob went yesterday to the prison of Sainte-Pélagie. They butchered the captives there like swine. Today it's the Abbey and the Convent of the Carmelites where the priests are gathered. God forgive us, it's going on this minute!"

That was the first news. It grew worse with details. They trickled in a gory stream. And, although from Roland's house went messengers with protests, pleas to the Assembly and to the Hôtel de Ville, although the Council met and Roland came home sick with horror, although anguished men conferred in Madame Roland's cabinet, they could do nothing. Paris was paralyzed. The Assembly was paralyzed. They had no forces at command, no authority to stop anything the Commune chose

to do. Helpless was every decent citizen before those awful happenings.

Most people did not know of them till afterwards. Those who did not live on the left bank of the Seine to hear the screaming mob go down the rue des Bucci and the bell of Saint-Sulpice ring out its knell of warning and despair, spent those dreadful days in peace. But Madame Roland at headquarters had to hear about it all.

One man walking at twilight with a friend on Monday along the rue de Saint-Père had stepped inadvertently into the gutter and found it wet with sticky substance. His companion stooped to look, "*Parbleu!*" he cried. "It's blood! The gutters are running with it!" And they took to their heels along the *quais*.

Another reported that eleven hundred priests and prisoners had perished. Champagneux with sweat upon his brow panted a tale of horrid villainy. The beautiful Princesse de Lamballes, held as suspect, was murdered and her head was carried on a pike beneath the windows of the queen's prison that she might see it and grow faint. "Oh, madame, to have such crimes stain our nation's honor!"

Madame Roland paced the room in desperation. "How can it be? No matter how fear of the Prussians holds the city, that a mere handful of terrorists can commit these deeds and the city lie prone!" And then she, like the others in her group, did the very thing she blamed them for—turned to words, the only weapons the Girondists held against the organized powers of active evil. With Louvet she

framed for the *Sentinel* bulletins to be posted about the city and mailed hither and yon—blazing denunciations of the massacres. She could not rest. What a Paris—murderers within its gates and the enemy pressing closer without! She wrote to Bancal, now at Clermont-Ferrand standing for the new elections:

> The Assembly makes decrees which smell of fear; the crowd rushes to the Abbaye and there massacres the people. The executive power has convoked all the commissioners of the sections to reason with them and unveil the evils of anarchy. All the horses are carried off. They have closed the gates and this retards all operations, for even the messengers of the executive power have been held back by the Commune in spite of ministerial passports. Adieu, a few days will throw great light on the fate of the capital.

Her fevered fingers then composed for Roland a letter of protest against the slaughter to be read at the Assembly. One of the few banners of courage which that feeble body dared raise, the letter was cheered, printed, and sent out to the nation. But what use were protests with the city in the grip of cutthroats? Danton's reappearance at the Council gave Roland his first chance to call him sternly to account. But the people's leader professed to be absorbed in nothing but the failure of Dumouriez before the enemy. "What do I care for the prisoners?" said he, sulky and savage.

And then it was that Madame Roland learned from Pétion why the *Sans-Culottes* had paid her a visit. On the fatal Sunday the mayor had received a call from Danton. Coming straight from

that committee of insurrection which, led by Marat, was even then launching the massacres, Danton said with that abrupt air which passed for candor, "Do you know what I've just learned? Haven't they sent out a decree of arrest for Roland?"

"Who did that?" cried Pétion, aghast.

"Oh, that mad committee. I seized the mandate. Look, here it is! Imagine, against a member of the Council!"

Pétion took the mandate, read it through, and returned it to Danton with a look which traversed him from head to foot. Then the mayor smiled scornfully. "Let them use it! It will produce a good effect!"

Danton searched the other's face curiously and slowly grasped his meaning. To arrest an official of the Republic at that moment might indicate a plot against the government which would turn popular wrath against the Commune. "Oh, no," said Danton at last, "I shall not permit this arrest. I shall reason with the committee."

The tale was clear to Madame Roland. When Pétion had finished it she said, "But of course! The authors of this mandate sent the *Sans-Culottes* here. Danton came to you prepared to take the credit either for a successful *coup* or for the skillful parry of a *coup* that failed—however it turned out. The crafty wretch!"

Pétion then showed her a circular which had been issued by Marat's committee and sent broadcast through the land. One glance assured Madame Roland that in the face of this the *Sentinel* had

been distributed in vain. Boasting of having put to death "ferocious traitors to the Commune," the message invited the whole of France to follow its example.

Madame Roland thought of Buzot receiving such a message. "History will preserve this document!" she cried in horror and was not surprised to hear what followed. At Meaux, Rheims, Caen, and Lyons, on the highways, at Versailles, priests, magistrates, aristocrats, and prisoners awaiting trial were murdered wholesale by followers of Marat, Danton, and Robespierre. Those who longed to protest were, like the Parisians, helpless, overawed and half convinced that with the Prussians advancing treachery had really been discovered and punished.

However, no further progress was made by the enemy. And since the election of delegates to the National Convention was now at hand, France, shuddering from the dreadful days passed through, slowly recovered a degree of equilibrium. And yet the first reports of the voting only added to the dismay of the Girondists. True, Brissot, Guadet, Vergniaud, and Barbaroux were returned and Bancal was elected. Thomas Paine, the American, was given a seat. Far more important than any of these reports, however, to Madame Roland was the news which set her heart to beating. A note from Buzot announced that he, also, was a delegate. But their enemies, even with bloodstains still upon them so managed activities at the polls as to come through, every one. On September ninth Madame Roland

wrote to Bancal, "My friend, Danton leads everything. Robespierre is his mannequin, Marat holds his dagger. If you only knew the frightful details of these massacres!"

The protest she and Roland made had now brought down upon them both the active enmity of the Commune leaders. This, in turn, was to widen the breach which had been slowly opening between the latter and the Girondists. Never again was it to close. So dangerous had it become to criticize any policy of the municipality that it was with the most intense feeling of relief that Madame Roland received the news her husband brought to her early in the second week of September.

"What do you think of this?" he asked in some excitement. "I have been elected—almost certainly, though the votes aren't all in yet—to the assembly from the department of the Somme. Now, I could resign my post with a clear conscience."

They considered the change together. Roland had been somewhat dashed to hear from Lanthenas that he had been elected from the Rhône-et-Loire and, although he was to remain at the ministry, it was with divided interest. "He no longer agrees with me whole-heartedly about the conduct of affairs," said Roland irritably. "That young man is swinging to the left. Would you ever have supposed he would?"

Madame Roland had been watching him, too. It was strange to feel the change in one who had always been so close. Had Buzot ever been so bound with her he would never have slipped away,

she knew. "If you resign," said Marie, turning from the direction her thoughts so often took, "who will be minister in your place?"

Roland had his answer ready, "Jean-Nicholas Pache." Poor Roland, poor Marie! Even before she was married Marie had heard of the virtues, wisdom, and capabilities of this man Pache. She had met him through dear friends and, although her own impression was of an individual commonplace enough, she had been influenced into thinking him one of the world's wonders. Pache who had been in the Assembly and in the Post Office seemed an efficient, quiet patriot, famous only for saying at the darkest moment of the war, "*Liberté, Egalité, Fraternité ou la mort!*"—a phrase which became a byword of the Republic. The deference shown by Pache for Roland's judgment had endeared him to the household. Roland did propose him when he went before the Assembly to resign and thus brought into prominence a creature whose only claim to greatness lay in the depths of his hypocrisy.

However, Roland's resignation was not accepted. Brissot and his party thought the change would be dangerous to their interests and begged him to remain. The discussion in the Assembly brought from Danton's lips a sample of the pitiless publicity which had begun to rain upon the head of Madame Roland. "It is no more than just," said Danton from the tribune, "that if Roland is invited to stay you must invite Madame Roland, also. All the world knows that Roland is not alone in his depart-

ment. As for me, I have always been alone in mine."

No wonder Roland thought it a sacrifice to remain in public office! Yet, if he had not yielded to what his wife called "Brissot's scolding," he would have had no place at all. For later election reports proved him defeated at the polls. And by this time he, no less than his determined "half," was resolved to remain in active life. Apparently he had no realization that administrative work under existing conditions was beyond him. Aside from producing innumerable pamphlets and letters, it is hard to see what positive good he accomplished.

However, he did make before the Assembly a number of vigorous and courageous protests against increasing lawlessness. Brigands in broad daylight robbed passers-by, and on the fifteenth of September the *Garde Meuble*, or treasury of the crown jewels, was broken into. Emeralds the size of filberts were found on the rue Saint-Florentin by maids who swept the sidewalks. Danton was accused by the Girondists of instigating the theft. Marat in turn, said Roland must have wished to profit by the robbery when he guarded the treasure so poorly. And, whereas the demagogues only laughed at accusations and turned them back upon those who hurled them, Roland was wounded to the heart.

Fortunately, the horrible confusion reigning in the capital was made no worse by news from the fighting line. The Prussians were checked. Now there seemed to be some hope of their defeat, and

the hearts of those who gathered about Madame Roland's hospitable board were somewhat lightened. She rejoiced at the unity of feeling amongst them. To a man they shared her horror of the Commune and all it stood for. As that Assembly, which had seen such terrific changes, came to an end the Girondists bravely hurled their challenge to the radicals.

Vergniaud, the orator, cried from the tribune: "The Parisians dare to call themselves free; they are no longer slaves of crowned tyrants, but they are slaves of the vilest, the most detestable scoundrels. It is time to break these shameful chains, to crush this new tyranny."

And now the moment to which Madame Roland had looked forward with such intense eagerness had come. Buzot returned to Paris at last. One day, forewarned by letter, she sat in her little workroom alone and waiting for the announcement of his name. At last the door opened and he stood before her. She had risen with a smile which she hoped would seem like the natural and friendly cordiality she endeavored to feel. But when Buzot came to her, holding out both hands, when she saw the yearning in his eyes and the tremulous, grave smile on his lips, her gay greeting died in her throat. For an instant they stood there in silence. She felt about her the whir of beautiful words all unspoken and her heart stood still to listen. So close had their spirits drawn through the constant exchange of letters that to come face to face again was an almost unbearable shock of delight. In that instant there

passed from one to the other an acknowledgment, a realization which at once became the thing they lived by.

Not for many weeks did Madame Roland and François Buzot sound the inevitably tragic depths of this fatal mutual attraction. They were conscious only of the joy of seeing each other every day, of sharing the same ideas, of exchanging across a crowded room a flash of intimate communication which so magically created for them that real world where they were alone together. They had need of that magic. For, with the opening of the new assembly on September twenty-first, the bitter, concrete struggle was upon them.

Still in the majority were the Girondists. But the tables were now turned and they were the party of the Right, the conservatives. On the left sat the radicals and because they occupied the highest seats in the hall these delegates were called the party of "The Mountain." Between the two wings was a group called "The Plain." These men, voting now one way, now another, were always more moderate than anything else. Such being the situation, you may wonder why the radical minority immediately developed such enormous power. If so, you have forgotten the Paris mob. If these cutthroats were not actually crowding the galleries brandishing pikes and shouting for whatever Marat or Robespierre or Danton and their satellites proposed, then they were outside, organized and ready to create havoc wherever it pleased their leaders to send them.

Tensely as these antagonists faced each other across the old riding hall, they shared on that opening day one great common emotion of joy. It had swept the city the day before and set bells to ringing, flags to waving, and strangers to embracing one another on the streets. For at last couriers on dripping horses had galloped in with news of victory. Dumouriez had given battle to the Prussians and turned them towards the border. Now he was in full pursuit with tigerish enthusiasm. Soldiers of the Republic marching on to victory! Ah, the ring of that message filled every heart with new hope.

No wonder the first act of the National Convention was a decree to abolish royalty and declare France a Republic! And yet the act was not unanimous. For in spite of everything there were still plenty of Frenchmen—and they were represented at the assembly—who had no faith in anything but a Constitutional Monarchy and who cherished a lingering loyalty to the imprisoned Louis Sixteenth. However, they were decidedly in the minority and the party of Brissot not only helped to pass that edict, but won all the places of control. Pétion was elected president and all the six secretaries, including Brissot, Condorcet, Louvet, and Bancal des Issarts, were Girondists. They swore in the Executive Council and asked from the minister of the Interior a report on the condition of the country.

Three days later Roland read the report. With the self-praise characteristic of the period, that boasting which would make the modern politician

seem an amateur, the minister presented a good showing for his work. With some courage he referred in severe terms to the recent disorders in the capital, begged for support for the Executive Council and demanded that the various departments should account for all the moneys they spent. He was roundly applauded and the report was ordered to be printed for distribution. The Mountain, however, sat silent. The attack of their *Sans-Culottes* upon Roland had recently failed, but they would get him yet and even now were launching a campaign of vilification in their popular journals.

Naturally any attack upon him would include his wife. Marat called her Penelope Roland, and Hébert in *Le Père Duchesne* referred to her always as Madame Coco. One number of the latter sheet declared: "We have destroyed royalty and in its place we have raised a tyranny still more odious. The other half of the virtuous Roland has France in leading strings today as once the Pompadours and the du Barrys."

François Buzot trembled with rage when Madame Roland showed him this paragraph. Even if the September massacres had not filled him with a determination to fight the Paris contingent to the finish, such attacks would have done so. He took up whole-heartedly the passionate antagonism his friend cherished for Danton and had hardly taken his seat in the Convention before he boldly reproved the powerful leader for bullying the people and the representatives of the nation.

Indeed, Madame Roland influenced the entire

Girondist party to concentrate their offensive upon Danton. Although his power was never so menacing as that of the steely Robespierre, they accepted her conception of it. They believed, as she believed, that he was behind all the attacks upon her and the more she was held up to popular scorn the more fervently they rallied about the woman who stood in their eyes for all that was vital and idealistic in the revolution.

These men found in her not only force and fire for the common cause, but a most endearing gift for friendship. She finally reconciled Bosc and Sophie Grandchamps. When Bancal came to tell her that he believed himself in love with a Miss Williams, she entered into his affair with sympathy and promptly made a friend of the young woman. When Joseph Servan broke the news that he could no longer stand the strain of work, she wept to have him leave the ministry but assured him that she understood. And after this happened the Rolands, still unsuspecting his real character, got Pache appointed minister of War. As for her attitude toward "the little brother," her patience with the change in him was almost incomprehensible. Not only were his politics estranging him, not only was he increasingly critical of Roland and of his party, but his friendship with Marie was becoming corroded by a strange tinge of jealousy.

It all began one October afternoon when the guests were gathering for the general weekly dinner at the ministry. Lanthenas upon entering the *salon*, found Madame Roland talking with a group of

men among whom were Buzot and Champagneux. Meeting her welcoming smile, he placed a box in her hands and said teasingly, "There, madame, is a surprise for you."

As she unwrapped it, she sank back with a deep blush. For it was a box of bonbons and on the lid was printed a portrait of herself. "*Voilà!*" cried Lanthenas. "A new tribute to your fame!"

Buzot looked, then turned to the younger man with an angry flash in his eyes. "Surely, monsieur, you are not pleased to have madame's portrait thus vulgarly bandied about!" Lanthenas raised his head with a haughty glare, but before he could speak Buzot went on: "If you are still in doubt as to the unfortunate results for our friend from such 'fame' as the sample you have just presented, you had best glance at the copy of Marat's journal on the table there!" He gestured imperiously and the other with a sulky look strolled over to pick up *L'Ami du Peuple.*

The paragraph was typical of the continual persecution the Mountain kept up. "The woman Roland has a very simple means of recruiting forces to attack the true defenders of the people's interests. She asks the men who wish to see her husband to supper where they make very merry together. She even chucks them under the chin." As Lanthenas finished reading it the valet announced dinner and the guests trooped in. Buzot passed close to him and said in a low tone, "Hardly delicate, that comment, is it?" And his jaw set in anger.

When later in the evening Lanthenas had an op-

portunity to speak to Madame Roland alone he said: "I want to warn you against that man Buzot. My friend, he is in love with you. I have suspected it before—so completely do his political views coincide with your own. But now I know. Do not become involved with him, I beg you!"

The mobile face he regarded had set in an expression of extreme haughtiness. "You are wrong at every point, Lanthenas," she returned coldly. "Monsieur Buzot is not a man to whom anyone dictates and I assure you I am 'involved,' as you put it, with no one. It makes me sad that to agree with me or come to my defense is to incur your dislike. It was not always thus, was it?" But, although the young man's eyes fell before her grave look, Marie thereafter felt whenever she talked with Buzot in the presence of Lanthenas a current of suspicious jealousy.

As October advanced the Executive Council learned that Dumouriez, whose campaign had been completely successful, was returning to Paris there to prepare plans for invading Belgium. Roland and his wife agreed that, whatever their ultimate judgment of Dumouriez, they really had publicly to place themselves on the side of the general who had saved the Republic. The minister therefore wrote him a somewhat awkward letter to assure him of cooperation at the Council. Moreover, as soon as the conquering hero reached the capital Marie invited him to a dinner in his honor. When he accepted she entertained the ghost of a hope that he might be

won over from Danton to the Girondists. But before the evening was over the ghost was dissipated.

True, the affair had begun brilliantly enough. The entrance made by the general was nothing if not theatrical. As his name was announced a hush fell over the deputies and administrators gathered within the gorgeous *salon*. There he stood in the military costume of the day—high boots turned down below the knee to show the buff facing, tight long trousers of buff and a blue coat, double-breasted only to the waist which was encircled with a red sash. In one hand he carried his plumed hat, in the other an enormous bunch of roses, and as Madame Roland advanced to greet him he presented them to her with a low bow. Yet, even then her quick glance noted an embarrassment of expression and an awkwardness of manner quite incompatible with such a man of the world.

This observation she hid in the cordiality of her greeting. "Ah, monsieur *le général*, the pleasant turn Fortune often makes enables me to receive you in this house again. I assure you that your flowers are not less gratefully received because they are presented by the conqueror of the Prussians." Then taking his arm she led him to the dinner table.

During the course of conversation the hero announced that he was going to the opera later. Whereupon young Barbaroux said, "Aren't you going, too, madame? You should take advantage sometimes of having a box there."

"No," she replied laughing. "One has to earn

one's distractions these days." Then turning to Buzot who sat beside her she murmured under cover of the general buzz of talk, "I wouldn't for the world appear there with Dumouriez. Imagine what the gossips would make of that."

"Certainly not, madame," he replied. "It would accord neither with your character nor your habits. Try as they may to find grounds for attacking you, our enemies have never discovered anyone with whom to connect your name. And pray God they never shall." He raised his glass of Bordeaux and their eyes met in a pledge which for all its gravity left her shaken with its secret sweetness.

Nevertheless, Madame Roland suddenly made up her mind she would go to the opera all the same. When dinner was over and the general had departed with most of the guests, she turned to Vergniaud and said, "The whim has seized me to go to my *loge* this evening. I have an idea I may learn something about our equivocal general. Little Eudora has begged me so often to take her that I think I shall. Would you be so good as to accompany me?"

With the eager child hopping into the cab before them in joyous excitement, they set out for the Porte Saint-Martin. Since the first act was partly over they found the foyers and stairs an empty expanse of marble and red velvet. In the first corridor Vergniaud summoned that proverbial, bent old woman who still has in Paris the task of unlocking the opera *loges*. She came in haste, key in hand, but when she was told whose box she was to open

she looked at them in astonishment. "But no, madame, it is already occupied."

"Impossible!" replied Madame Roland. "I have given my ticket to no one."

"But it was the minister himself who wished to enter," mumbled the usher.

"No, not he. Open the box, please, and let me see for myself."

At the door were several *Sans-Culottes* whose rough appearance made Eudora press closer to her mother's side. "You can't get in," they said, "the minister is there."

"I cannot refuse to open for madame," replied the old woman and turned the key.

Madame Roland stepped to the door and looked in. There in the dimness silhouetted against the brilliance of the stage, she beheld the gigantic outline of Danton's head and shoulders. With him was Fabre d'Églantine and several painted and extravagantly attired women. She saw Danton lean towards the next box and the head which projected itself to listen to his murmur was that of her recent guest Dumouriez. She quickly withdrew from the door and signed the usher to lock it once more.

"Aren't we going to see the play after all, *maman?*" asked Eudora, with lips trembling with disappointment.

"Well, madame?" questioned the usher.

"It is, indeed, the former minister of Justice who occupies my box without invitation," she replied. "I prefer to leave him the fruit of his impertinence to being seen in his vicinity. Never mind,

darling,"—she drew Eudora's hand through her arm—"we'll come again sometime when Monsieur Danton is not our enforced guest."

"As a matter of fact," she said to Vergniaud, when they were once more in the *fiacre*, "I am quite grateful to Danton. I shouldn't have cared for such close proximity to the occupant of the next box. Everyone would have said there were plots afoot. Well, there you are! A wasted effort on my part this evening! It is Danton who means to profit by the general's success."

"It is understood," replied her companion, "the power of the one flatters that of the other. Oh, madame," he broke off in another tone, "a tear has just fallen upon my hand. What can we do to make up for Eudora's disappointment."

"Ah! We"ll keep her in the *salon* an hour later than bedtime and Monsieur Bosc will tell her stories. Won't that be splendid, my little doll?"

As the carriage turned off the rue Saint-Martin a *Sans-Culotte* with a pile of papers under his arm shouted in at the window. "Buy a copy of *Père Duchesne!* Learn how the famous Madame Coco treats true patriots!"

Madame Roland's hand went to her throat: "Another attack! More lies! Oh, Vergniaud, I am beginning to stifle in this sickening vulgarity."

Her companion had exchanged a coin for a copy of the paper and he now shook it savagely in air: "Thus is freedom of the press turned into travesty! Yes, madame, the slime creeps closer every day. But such filth as this serves but as another urge to

fight the tyrants of misrule. It is horrible to have you subjected to these insults!"

What had they said about her now? It proved to be a more than usually elaborate satire presented with the kind of rough skill and coarse humor likely to appeal to the rabble. The tale began with the arrival of a group of honest *Sans-Culottes* at the ministry of the Interior. They wished to warn Roland that the country was in danger. But the *concierge* told them that even so "the virtuous Roland" could not be disturbed at dinner.

The passionate patriots, insisting, neverthless, managed to get in as far as the corridor. But there they were flung against the wall by the onrush of a file of waiters. The first one, tray in hand, hurtled by, shouting: "Gangway! Open the door! These are the entrées for the virtuous Roland!" There followed footmen with hors-d'œuvre, roasts, side-dishes—all for "the virtuous Roland." Finally, in despair, the *Sans-Culottes* began to beat a retreat. But as they went out through the pantry one of them upset the dessert. At this the wife of Roland, plunging out to investigate the rumpus, was so furious that she tore out her false back hair.

That was an unforgivable insult. False hair, indeed! Perhaps it was to refute the accusation that she posed for the miniatures she was having painted in bits of spare time with her beautiful chestnut hair flowing down her back. Yes, she was having three portraits made and one of them was for Eudora. It was no act of vanity which prompted this undertaking. It was her sense of the imminence

of her danger. She was a marked figure, and what could prevent Danton from having his thugs make way with her? To have ready some image of herself to leave behind was part of her complete state of preparation for the worst. Every day the gulf deepened between the Girondists and the Mountain.

It was only a short time after this when Bancal des Issarts came rushing in one late afternoon to tell her of a tremendous scene which had just occurred at the Convention. "Barbaroux made a personal attack on Robespierre," he said. "It began when Lasource warned the assembly of a growing dictatorship in Paris. He had just said he would not yet name this power when two Marseillais rushed to the tribune shouting, 'We'll tell you who they are! They are the party of Robespierre!'"

"What?" cried Madame Roland. "Robespierre the dictator? No! What, then, is Danton?"

"Less than that in the eyes of many. Witness today! Danton wasn't even mentioned." Bancal began to walk up and down in great excitement. "When his fellows had named Robespierre, Barbaroux rose up in his place and cried, 'I'd like to sign that denunciation!' The sensation was tremendous. But 'The Incorruptible' remained unmoved. He replied to his accusers with the coldest contempt.

"Then Marat took the stage. Limping up to the tribune, he beat his dirty coat and cried: 'I have in this assembly a large number of personal enemies.' He got no further. For at these words from every part of the hall except where the Mountain sat

came one unanimous shout, 'All are your enemies! All!' It was blood-curdling. But that monster didn't turn a hair. He shouted back that he, 'the people's friend,' felt honored by the enmity of traitors to liberty. Then he waved a pistol and threatened to shoot himself. But when he saw the unbelieving and scornful smile on every face, he cried, 'No. I shall remain with you to brave your fury!' I assure you it was just like a piece at the theater. Of course, Marat achieved his object—to divert the attack on Robespierre."

Madame Roland had followed this narrative with a truly Latin delight in drama. But now a wave of depression swept over her. It was mere sound and fury after all. What was her party doing to organize sanity with sufficient force to keep anarchy at bay? Merely to denounce evil wasn't enough. One had to make good come true.

That evening even Buzot disappointed her for an instant. She told him something of her feeling that the Girondist party was deficient in men of constructive vision. And Buzot, turning upon her his gentle, melancholy gaze, replied, "No wonder you find us wanting—you who are so superior!"

In saying this Buzot was merely repeating the estimate made by many shrewd observers of this revolutionary period. They agreed with what one of them later set down in print, that if Madame Roland had been a man she would have been a more effective leader than any the Girondists actually had and that "although the king would still

have fallen, the Mountain would never have triumphed."

If she sometimes sounded her own depths of unused power Madame Roland hated to confess the contrasting weakness of the men about her. Her eyes flashed at Buzot now and she said to him, "If I am thought superior—an untrained, inexperienced creature with a mere woman's brain, it is just one more proof of easy-going standards!"

Champagneux, strolling towards the two, caught the last words. "But no, madame," he said earnestly, "you have the brain of a man with the grace of a woman. You always had."

Marie smiled at him with a look of deep and trustful affection. This man was no leader, but if everyone were as adequate for his work as he, the demagogues would never have achieved their present sway. "My excellent friend!" she murmured. "Without your efficiency and cleverness the department would cease to exist. Whatever becomes of Roland and me you must remain with it. Some day France will sicken of monsters and then you can restore her to health."

"Will posterity say, do you think," asked he reflectively, "that men like Marat have no patriotism, that they care nothing for liberty?"

With tilted head and eyes half closed she had the look of a sybil as she weighed the question. "Perhaps not," she said slowly, "but their pride knows no scruple, no humanity, no limit of excess and for that they are to be condemned now and hereafter."

Buzot's eyes had never left Madame Roland's face for an instant. Now he spoke again, "One must question, also, the honesty of their relations—with the Duc d'Orléans, for example. You have told me you receive no one here who is even remotely connected with Philippe Egalité, but he has many friends in the Mountain—paid friends, of course. It is a bad sign. Everyone suspects him of cherishing a secret desire to be king himself, and who would trust a man like Danton not to back him up for gold? I intend to demand his resignation."

"Ah, yes! Do it! Rid France of all the Bourbons, my friend! They are vipers in our midst."

She lifted her face with something of its former glow and Buzot sprang to his feet with a characteristic movement of light grace. How one they were! They shared alike hates, convictions, doubts. Didn't they almost at the same moment find themselves doubting the loyalty of Jean-Nicolas Pache? The first time Roland told them of sums assigned to Danton without advice from the Council they had seen the handwriting on the wall. They didn't wish to believe that he was becoming a willing tool. Madame Roland had written him one of her warm notes, reminding him of their long friendship, pleading for candor between them. Pache never even answered it. He treated Roland at the Council meetings with the distant coldness of a mere acquaintance who disliked him. Heaven only knew what Danton would make the minister of War accomplish for him!

Buzot even shared Madame Roland's instinctive

hesitations. They discovered that when the question of the king's fate at last became the one great issue. It seemed to Madame Roland as she listened to the debates about the dinner table that each member of the party had an individual solution. Vergniaud believed the Convention had no power at all to act as court of justice for Louis. He wished to appeal directly to the people and place upon the whole of France the responsibility of decision. Brissot was for delaying the question indefinitely. Buzot, on the other hand, thought the people couldn't be trusted to vote sagely and wished the Convention to banish or continue to imprison the king until times of peace and internal calm. This was almost what Madame Roland would have stood for and, indeed, had in Buzot a voice to utter the very speeches she would have made. Independently they arrived again and again at the same conclusion, a fact which made her heart rise with exaltation. Here was the one being who touched the depths of her soul!

It was inevitable that the emotion which these two confessed to each other by glance and gesture should some time burst into expression. Typical of a mutual destiny which was completely involved in the revolution, it was a scene at the Convention which finally shattered the tense reserve between them.

Buzot, determined to pry the Convention free from the dictation of Paris, framed a proposal aimed at the disturbing presence of the *Sans-Culottes* and fishwives in the galleries. He suggested that

only visitors holding tickets be admitted and that the tickets should be delivered by the presidents of the sections before the assembly. The Mountain recognized the measure for what it was, a blow at the brute force which gave the minority its illegal power. Before the proposition could be debated it was drowned in the burst of laughter which followed Marat's response to it. Lifting his loathsome hulk from a back bench, he shouted: "That's the plan of the Roland woman. Take it back where it belongs—to her boudoir!"

Immediately other business succeeded and François Buzot, struggling to master the onrush of fury, humiliation and outraged chivalry which engulfed him, sat as still as a statue of disdain. Presently he arose, left the assembly and directed his steps toward the rue Neuf-des-Petits-Champs. It was the day of the general dinner. He knew he would find Madame Roland in her cabinet. And it seemed to him as he crossed the cobblestones that he would have gone through rivers of fire to see her at that moment.

Tapping at the door, he was bidden to enter. There she sat, quill in hand, quite alone and looking in her exquisite freshness the very embodiment of feminine charm and patriotic devotion. For an instant he stood still, his back against the door, trying to subdue the mad rush of feeling which made his heart a suffocating oppressor. That this glorious woman's name should through him have been on the lips of such a monster!

"Why, what is it? What has happened?" Ris-

ing in her place, Madame Roland stood regarding him in tremulous anxiety. At the sound of her magic voice, thrilling with concern for him, the last ounce of Buzot's self-control deserted him. With a bound he was before her. He took her in his arms and cried in a voice eloquent of long-suppressed feeling, "Marie, Marie, Marie! What would I not give to save you from any touch of evil!"

Barriers were down, the flood tide rolled over them and for one moment of ecstasy they forgot everything except each other. One moment only! Then the disciplined will possessed alike by Marie Roland and by her lover asserted its stern claim.

She drew back to regard him with wet and shining eyes: "I am married to a good man, and you to a good woman. We can neither abandon them nor deceive them. Even supposing at any time we were willing to cause them suffering it could not be now. Roland is old, ill, and beset with enemies. Every eye is upon him. And upon you. No, no, heart of my heart, this love of ours can never be."

These were his very thoughts. With broken words he acquiesced. He believed that personal happiness must yield to the rights of others and to the vast claims of the Republic. Yet how, by all the powers, how was he going to bear the weight of this tragic duty?

Suddenly as they talked there came the distant sound of voices. Marie started and turned. Quickly stooping to her secretary, she drew from a compartment a small velvet case. "*Voici!* Here,

my beloved, perhaps this will bring you the sense of the closeness I shall ever desire." Into his hands she placed one of the miniatures which had just been finished.

With a look of passionate gratitude he kissed her fingers and slipped the case into the deep pocket of his waistcoat. "I shall wear it on my heart forever," he said. Then as a peremptory knock sounded on the door he walked to the window and turned his back upon the room.

At that moment Lanthenas entered. "Madame, I have come for your letter ——" He stopped. Buzot alone with her! Tears upon her lashes! The young man's face darkened with jealous fury.

"What letter, my friend?" Madame Roland faced him with false calm.

The eyes of Lanthenas darted suspicion, his voice was choked with anger. At last he stammered, "The letter—your letter to the Pope—if you have finished drafting it."

She turned back to the desk. Like every woman of her race, she possessed something of the actress and at this moment she drew upon the resource with a freedom which must have amazed the agitated man at the window. "Yes, I have it," her voice lifted gaily. "And I assure you I amused myself no little in its composition. Think of me tracing in secret a protest to His Holiness, the great Prince of Rome, in the name of the Executive Council of France! What a diverting and absurd anomaly!" She laughed musically, glancing over her shoulder. It was a charming bit of histrionic art.

Proof of its success lay not in the response of Lanthenas, whose dark look persisted. But Buzot now turned around, nodded at the visitor, and said to Marie with an attempt at lightness, "And what new grudge have you against the Pope? May I know?"

"But certainly. The only secret about the letter is that I am the author of it. I was protesting against an injustice only now come to our notice—the imprisonment of certain French artists in Rome. Here it is, Lanthenas, and don't forget that we are expecting you shortly for dinner." She accompanied him to the door and stood there with her hand on the latch.

A duel of glances took place between them. "I shall not be at dinner," he said in a hostile tone, "but look in your letter box tonight, madame, for something important to your welfare."

Shaken as she was by the emotions of the last hour, Madame Roland dreaded the strain of meeting her guests at dinner. But both she and Buzot found it easier than they expected. For there was news. A violent turn had been given the discussion which in the last hour of the assembly session had centered on the fate of Louis Sixteenth. Robespierre had at last declared himself. He had spoken in opposition to any trial at all.

One of the deputies rehearsed the speech to his hostess. "The Incorruptible" was possessed of a new eloquence. "The trial of the tyrant is the insurrection," he had said, "his judgment is the fall of his power, his punishment, that which is de-

manded by the liberty of the people. Louis must die because the people must live."

"Death without trial!" murmured Madame Roland, awe-struck. "So that is what the Mountain demands!"

"Yes," said Bancal, "Danton's coarse phrase was, 'We are not the king's judges. We are his executioners!'"

A shudder ran round the table. Roland's protest against the barbarity of passing sentence without trial was general. But no one agreed as to what the sentence should be. As she listened to the little jets of eloquence arising here and there from the group Madame Roland's heart sank. She realized that these men hadn't it in them to present a united front to the enemy and therefore, although they might force the Convention to grant a trial, they would never be able to save the king's life. "If the Mountain triumphs in that tremendous issue," she thought, "then the day of the Gironde is done." The tragic forecast was a true one. But what this prophet could not guess was that Roland himself was to present to the regicide Mountain a piece of important evidence against the monarch.

Roland, indeed, had not confided in his wife a secret anxiety which he cherished. The minister was trying to recover the papers which from time to time he had presented to the king written in the friendly spirit of coöperation. Such documents were dangerous. Should they reach the hand of his enemies they would be taken as evidence of treachery. For this reason the minister was searching

everywhere for the lost packet. The Executive Council was now meeting in the dismantled Tuileries and every day its members could observe the lean figure of their colleague wandering from room to room.

Alas for the virtuous of this earth! They are so often the butt of unseemly jokes perpetrated by the ribald. It was probably Pache who reported to Marat these ministerial prowls about the Tuileries. For Pache was now appearing in his true wolf's clothing. At any rate Marat for his own private entertainment subjected "the virtuous Roland" to a horrible form of jest. He had word sent to the minister that the queen's maid had confessed to dropping down the drain on the morning of August tenth a package of valuable documents. The tale was credited. Promptly Roland had the sewers of the palace searched and every scrap of paper in them flung into a tub of vinegar. From this, with a bit of gauze over his nose and gloves on his hands, he lifted each morsel with a pair of tongs and carefully examined it. Of course, nothing of import was discovered. But Marat in his den on the rue des Cordeliers laughed until his sides ached and told the story far and wide.

It even reached the former *valet de chambre* of the king. Hoping for reward, this person came to the minister and revealed to him a secret panel in Louis's private room, now empty, behind which was hidden a packet of state documents. The room was under an official seal which prohibited the entrance of anyone without authority. Probably

Roland thought he possessed that authority. With the palace architect for witness, he went with the valet to the spot and removed the packet. Immediately, according to the story both the Rolands swore to, he went with it directly to the Convention and laid it before the president.

At once a storm of suspicion broke over him. He was accused of abstracting from the package, seized without permission, documents incriminating himself. Treasonable charges were presented against him. Other charges followed. Robespierre once more stated that the minister of the Interior had received millions from the robbery of the *Garde-Meuble*. On December seventh an ardent Dantonist declared that after Roland's dismissal in June he had done everything to injure Dumouriez and had tried to give aid to the Duke of Brunswick. The plot, said the accuser, was well known to Roland's friends and to his household.

Facing from the tribune that ring of hostile men, Roland suddenly felt too burdened by fatigue, age, and illness to combat them. He longed at this dreadful moment for the aid of that ardent vitality upon which he had never called in vain. Turning to the president, he demanded that, since the charge had involved her, Madame Roland should be heard by the Convention. The request was granted and a messenger was sent to fetch her from the ministry.

A buzz of excitement ran through the entire assembly. Many of the men who sat in the Plain, many of those belonging to the Mountain, had never seen the woman of whom they had heard and

read so much. Marat leaned across his neighbor to mutter to Danton with his thick-lipped leer, "Hah! Patriots can now gaze at last upon the infamous Madame Coco's very face!" Robespierre's compact jaw drew tighter. The man beside him asked uneasily, "What will she say? What will she do?" But "The Incorruptible" replied only by a look of utter scorn.

On the right, however, the murmur of anticipation was an expression of eagerness and joy. Hardly a man there but had taken her firm hand in greeting at the ministry. Scarcely one who did not hold Madame Roland's image in his heart as a kind of symbol of idealistic purpose. Brissot, his worn face smoothing out, murmured to Louvet de Couvrai, "This ought to help our cause!" Bancal glanced curiously at the stubborn face of Lanthenas lifting from among his fellows in the Plain. Vergniaud said loudly, "She'll silence these devilish tongues, I know!" And Barbaroux, flushed with triumph, said to Buzot: "I'll wager my last sou on the impression Madame Roland makes!" Buzot did not reply. His slender hands were clenched upon his knee. His eyes were fixed upon the door. "What a moment!" his heart beat out the words. "What a great moment for her and for us all!"

Chapter Eight

AT LAST! The door swung open. A small, erect figure appeared. Madame Roland was announced. Instantly a round of applause starting from the Right wing swept the house. Even many on the upper benches forgot and clapped their hands. Every eye was upon the woman summoned to testify for her husband. Every delegate bent forward in his seat, tense with interest.

The demonstration had lasted until her quick, light feet had carried Madame Roland up the steps of the tribune. Now with brief bow and flashing smile she acknowledged the courtesy of her audience.

Pétion was presiding. Greeting her deferentially, he at once began the interrogation. "Citizen," said he, "the Convention has desired to hear you. What is your name?"

"Roland," she replied in a voice so full and rich that its low tone carried to the farthest corner of the hall. "Roland—name that I honor because it belongs to a good man."

Again the party of the Right applauded. Calm, assured, dignified, with an air of innocent candor which carried an impression of untarnished youth, she answered every question without an instant's hesitation.

Brissot exchanged with Vergniaud a glance of triumph. It was a great move on Roland's part to have had his wife summoned. She was doing a thing impossible for a personality so dry and colorless as his, winning the assembly by her wit and charm. The Plain was responding to a man. The Mountain, silenced, listened uneasily to this gifted witness for the defense. Buzot's eyes turned upon Robespierre. He thought of the night when Madame Roland had pleaded with him for this man, her enemy now. Only by the nervous biting of his nails and the black look on his thin face did he indicate his sense of the effect she was producing. Buzot also saw Marat whispering angrily at the ugly mask which was Danton's face, stamped on the instant with reluctant admiration. As for Roland, he gazed at his wife with grateful astonishment. What to him had been purgatory was evidently to her a triumphant opportunity to hold the stage.

At last the testimony was completed. Pétion rose, bowed, thanked the witness warmly, and in a round of thunderous applause she descended the steps of the tribune.

"*Mon Dieu*, what a woman!" whispered Louvet to Barbaroux. "I should like to make her the heroine of my next romance."

Buzot was right. It was Madame Roland's great moment, the last great moment but one of her life. There is no doubt that by it she not only gave a new impulse to Girondist support of her husband,

but infused fresh spirit into the waning power of the entire party.

That evening Buzot secured a moment alone with her. His hungry eyes clung to her face. "How wonderful you were today! There is no one like you. I am certain you turned the hostile tide back from Roland for a while and that the present accusations will be dropped. Oh, my beloved, what life would be like had I the right to claim you as my own!"

For an instant she leaned upon his breast. Yes, even within this fiery ring of hate, beside him life would be glorious. Here was youthful ardor akin to hers, here was courage and a sensibility to all beautiful and noble things. Here was a oneness of feeling, the like of which she had never dreamed. With a terrific effort of the will she moved away.

"Wait!" he commanded. With a tender smile he drew from his pocket a miniature fastened on a velvet ribbon. It was a portrait of himself. "Wear this for me!" he whispered, and slipped the ribbon over her shining head.

That very night as if he had been witness of the scene Lanthenas slipped into her letter box another missive of jealousy and reproach. As long as Madame Roland's heart was singly dedicated to her husband Lanthenas could hold himself calmly to the rôle of "little brother." But his love for this woman, ten years denied, leaped into flame the moment his sure intuition told him that for the first time another had possessed her imagination. Hardly could he bear to see her. There, under the

same roof, he guarded a jealous isolation broken only by a stream of raging letters.

She answered every one. Wrong as was his coarse interpretation of her feeling, the accuracy of his suspicion as to its object had put her on the defensive. Moreover, she was sorry for him and sad that in a world so full of hatred one man's friendship for her had to turn to gall. Even in such fragments from her notes to Lanthenas as can be set down here you can find this mixture of old affection and the indignation it tried to dominate.

As for these latter days, I do not see of what injustice you can complain. I feel for you esteem, friendship, confidence and certainly if you have withdrawn because I granted these sentiments to those whom you dislike, that is your right, but you can hardly find this evil. . . .

Unjust as passion, furious as desire, your letter would be atrocious were it not so wild. It makes you hateful to anyone who knows you less well than I do. You wish to judge of what you know nothing and you have only set down injuries. I pity and pardon you. Are you coming to dine today—for the others, at least?

Indeed, she missed Lanthenas not only as a staunch friend, but as a political ally. For now as steadily as doom itself approached the day when the fate of Louis Seize had to be decided. The documents brought in by Roland had given new weight to accusations of the king. But the minister, like most of the Girondists, was strongly opposed to the death sentence desired by the Mountain. Even that ruthless horde, however, were moved when, after four months in the grim old Temple prison, Louis was brought to the assembly to hear his accusers.

Brissot said afterwards to Madame Roland, "The very galleries were hushed when the king stood on the tribune. But, although our party succeeded in getting him not only a trial, but proper counsel with whom he can confer in private, I often wonder whether we can save his life."

She had no hope of it. She knew too well that any sentence but death meant embarrassment to the government. If Louis were banished he might reach the fugitive aristocrats and give them new impetus against the revolutionists. If he were indefinitely imprisoned it might cause one of those furious mob invasions of the Temple to stain again the escutcheon of France. But her instinct told her that out of this dilemma some way might be found were vision only clear enough and justice sufficiently strong. Her sad eyes took the measure of the moderates. She knew that in these high-minded, idealistic men was not the force to guide the fortunes of France.

What further proof of their weakness did she need than these unabated attacks upon Roland and herself? Threats against his life and rumors of assaults upon the house had twice driven them forth with Eudora and the servants to spend the night with friends.

One evening about nine o'clock Buzot and Champagneux came in together to give another warning. They were greatly concerned. "Through friends at the Jacobin Club we've heard that an armed body of *Sans-Culottes* is going to make a rush on the ministry tonight. Too late to secure a guard now!

You must leave. Go to Madame Pétion's house or to other friends. You must not remain here."

A look of outraged weariness stamped itself on Madame Roland's face. "What villainy!" she exclaimed. "One is well repaid in Paris for serving the cause of liberty. But I don't believe in these rumors. We've left before and nothing happened." She turned impulsively to her husband. "My good friend, let us stay and brave fate. Don't you agree?"

"For myself I would gladly agree, but not for you and Eudora. Go, I beg you and put on the costume of your *bonne* and we'll get a *fiacre* and leave at once!"

Her further protests were beaten down by the combined urging of the others. Presently, therefore, after the absence of a few minutes, she came down in the dark skirt and apron lent her by the faithful Marguerite Fleury. In her hand she held a gray wig and bonnet. "Help me!" she cried. "I cannot get these things to fit and I haven't wakened Eudora yet. She was sleeping so prettily, the poor innocent."

For an instant the three men labored with grave urgency to adjust the costume. Half laughing, altogether flurried by anxiety and haste, she twisted and struggled. Suddenly she snatched the wig and bonnet from her head, tore off the apron and flung everything upon the floor. "To the devil with this business!" she cried. "It's too humiliating! I shall not go one step. If we do leave the assassins can

fall upon us easily—if they are watching. We're just as safe here."

Flushed with vexation, she turned upon her companions with so much the look of a disobedient child that, perturbed as they were, they roared with laughter. The sound of it at such a time, however, instantly sobered them and once more they renewed their arguments.

Madame Roland picked up the discarded garments and laid them on a chair. Drawing herself up she said with superb dignity: "No, I have made up my mind. If Danton's villains are determined to cut our throats it had far better be done here. It would then add something to the personal glory of the minister—an unimportant consideration—and it might achieve something for the cause of public peace. That would be worth dying for."

Her exalted look converted the scene which had verged on comedy into a representation of triumphant courage which Buzot and Champagneux remembered all their lives. Yes, she was right. For such a woman to sneak forth in disguise was altogether out of keeping. Better for her who had led them into battle against the powers of evil to perish at her post. Her fearless eyes put to rout the horror in their hearts, and they went away convinced that she was invincible.

"I'll have your bed brought into my room," she said to Roland when they were alone, "and shall sleep with a small pistol on my night table. It might serve to frighten marauders even if I didn't

hit them—which is most likely." And laughing gaily, she patted his arm.

Roland caught her hand and carried it to his lips. "You are my happiness and my life," he murmured, "if anything should ever happen to you it would be all over for me."

No *Sans-Culottes* appeared that night. Two nights later, however, she woke at two o'clock to the sound of many feet tramping outside the gate. She went to the window and listened. Footsteps, muffled commands, and curses sounded from every direction. "The house is surrounded," she breathed, "but I shall not waken Roland until something worse happens." For over an hour she watched and listened. At last the sounds receded and she knew the danger was over.

For that time! But it always hung over the house. Another night Barbaroux hurried in at eleven to tell Madame Roland he'd had word that a band of *Sans-Culottes* were on their way to the ministry. When, smiling a refusal at his handsome, worried young face, she stood firm about leaving, Barbaroux cried, "Then I shall get a troop of Marseillais to guard your house!" And off he rushed to execute the order. That was one night when Marie slept in peace.

In her heart she never expected to leave the ministry alive. And, although she could bear that fate for herself and even for her husband, it was different with Eudora. Her uneasiness about the child was a constant ache. Finally, she and Roland determined to send her back to Villefranche to his

brother. They called in Mademoiselle Mignot and consulted her. The governess was willing, even glad to quit a spot where danger and death were daily companions. For days they planned. Marie wrote to Canon Dominique and received his consent. She and Roland made him the child's legal guardian and they arranged with him a settlement on Mademoiselle Mignot which would in a simple way provide for her always.

For this the governess thanked them with every air of gratitude. With middle-aged sobriety she assured them that their trust did her honor and that they might count upon her devotion. Little did Marie foresee that the woman whom she now embraced with impulsive affection was to betray her before twelve months were gone.

If only nothing happened before the two could get off! How the child would be missed! She had been her mother's only comfort on Christmas day. Roland was ill, Buzot occupied at home. And what with the arrival of two unsigned letters threatening death to the minister and the journals reporting that it was forbidden even to have the churches open for fear of restive crowds, Madame Roland found little enough in December twenty-fifth to bring her peace. Only Eudora's innocent gaiety cut the general gloom. She had so enjoyed coming to dinner with Bosc and Barbaroux and Sophie Grandchamps. The child was beginning to show a certain maturity of manner and a dependability which, together with her charm, might possibly—her mother admitted—prove more useful to her than

a passion for Plutarch. That evening Madame Roland went in to Eudora's room for a last embrace. Ah, if she only knew this little fair-haired creature would be happy, would marry for love—a good man and a young man—the sadness in her heart would lift.

"*Maman*, why do you hold me so tight? Are you afraid like Mademoiselle Mignot?"

Marie drew back and looked at the elfin sweetness of that small face. She thought to herself that really she ought to make the most of this moment and tell her, as she often had, that no daughter of France ever made terms with fear. But she felt the formula was beyond her. "Sometimes I am a little afraid, darling—afraid of not being good enough."

"You? Why, mother, you *are* good. Monsieur Bosc says you're an angel. Good enough for what?"

"To be your mother, my own." And with a swift embrace she was gone.

Some time later, after sitting for a while with Roland in his bedroom, she went down to her cabinet to work. She sorted a few papers, she made a few notes and then sat for a long time looking at the miniature she drew from under her filmy fichu. At last with a sigh she put it away, took up her pen and wrote a letter to brother Dominique fixing the final details of Eudora's prospective arrival.

That finished, she glanced at the blotted scrawls which had arrived that morning to bring their threat of death to Roland and to her. She tore them into bits. Sudden death would solve many

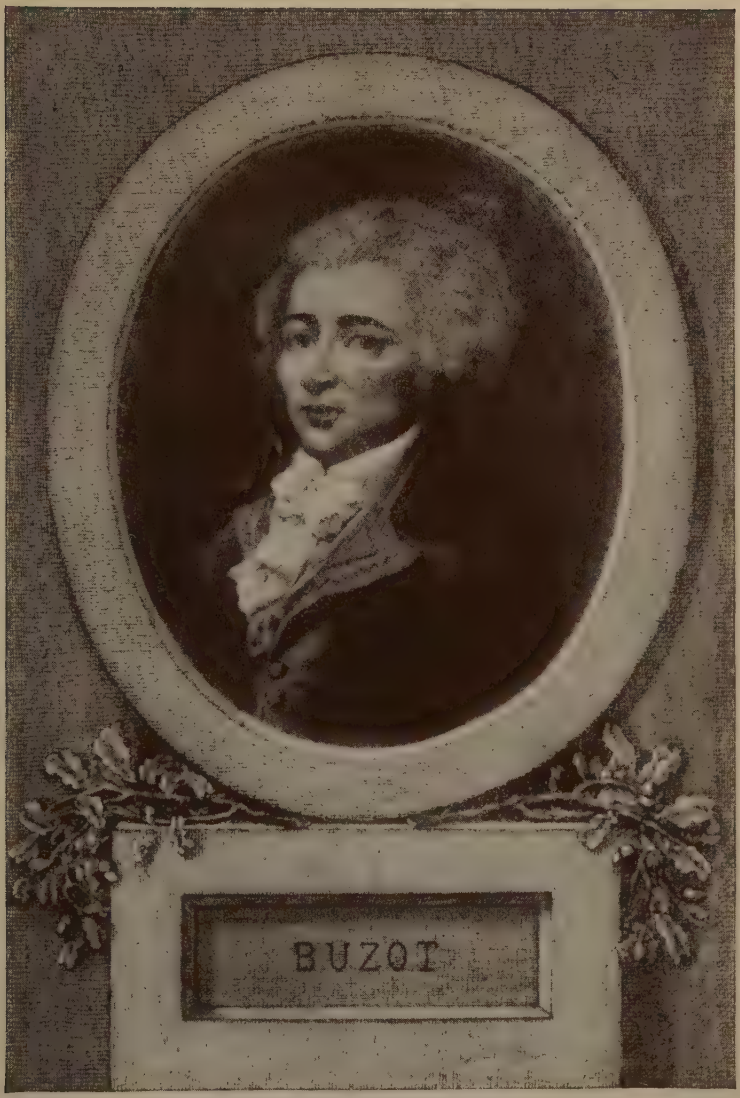
problems. The only trouble with it was there would be no time for good-byes. Suddenly she thought of Joseph Servan. What a pity to leave this world without a word to that dear friend! Once more she picked up her pen to warn him of her peril. "Antagonism to the king has increased public violence against the moderate ministers and Marat is not harder upon Antoinette than he is upon me." With a word of affection she told him she was sending him a portrait of herself, duplicates of which were possessed only by her daughter and one other.

As she wrapped and sealed the packet Louis tapped upon the door. "Madame, shall I put out the candles and make fast the doors? Monsieur Lanthenas has just come in."

"Yes, Louis. Go to bed. I shall take my candle up with me."

She sat on, waiting for she knew not what. Not for "the little brother," certainly. He, alas, was that no longer! Finally, she closed her desk, took the candle and made her way up the great staircase. Beside her bedroom window she stood for an instant looking up at the brilliant stars. Suddenly the bell of Saint-Eustache pealed out. Heavens! Her hand went to her heart. What was that, the tocsin? No. Even and clear the bell went on. It was only sounding twelve o'clock. "The day is over," she thought, "I wonder if I shall see another Christmas."

After New Year's day the Rolands received bad news from Lyons. The entire region was convulsed with plots and uprisings. Champagneux had heard the same tidings. Once more the aristocrats there



MINIATURE OF FRANÇOIS BUZOT, FOUND IN A JUNK SHOP IN 1864, STILL CONTAINING BEHIND THE FRAME A MEMORANDUM IN MADAME ROLAND'S HANDWRITING

were attempting to undermine the influence of Jacobin authority. Hoping to bring about a return of the old régime, they were allying themselves in secret with refugee nobles and foreign powers. But word of it had got about and the consequent ferment was terrific, the jails crowded, and executions a matter of daily occurrence.

"They say every traveler is searched," said Champagneux. "I'm afraid, my dear friends, it would be impossible under such deadly circumstances to send Eudora down to Villefranche."

The stricken parents were obliged to agree. "My poor little darling," cried Madame Roland with a heartbroken sob, "how can we protect her from these human tigers?" There was no answer. The child of revolutionists had but to take her chance of survival with the rest.

"Dearly as I should love to be once more at Le Clos," said Roland, "I wouldn't go even if I could. With Pache proving a traitor to the Right, I have no intention of deserting Brissot now. If only I could go before the assembly and answer my accusers! Were I only judged, I could prove the sincerity of my purpose and the integrity of my every act!"

His look of age and illness at the moment struck his wife's heart anew with pity for him, despair for herself and rebellion against destiny. Her personal struggle was becoming harder every day. Well she knew that if she relaxed ever so little the firmness of her grip upon what she thought was right Buzot's self-control would weaken on the instant.

How he looked at her! What moments they sometimes snatched in the midst of all the turmoil! Where, by what means could she find the strength to resist this perfect love which had come into her life—too late?

The beginning of 1793 brought news of Dumouriez's success in Belgium. With this campaign the threat of invasion from any foreign power seemed over. As a result that popular fury, which both the Commune and the Mountain required to maintain their dominance, was turned back into a former channel and now rushed against the king. The hue and cry was after any man so lacking in patriotism as to be willing to let Louis Sixteenth continue to draw breath. Tension at the assembly was terrific. The deputies who came in to the mansion on the rue Neuf-des-Petits-Champs had need of its warmth and cheer and the serenity which Madame Roland tried always to offer them.

January seventeenth was the decisive day when the roll call was taken on the king's sentence. For twenty-four hours the debate continued. The galleries were filled with the dregs of humanity, men and women who howled continuously for the blood of the tyrant and threatened vengeance upon the head of anyone who meant to deny them their royal victim. Thus the Mountain flung the full strength of the Commune against the frail eloquence of the men who spoke in favor of mercy. The roll was taken by departments. Each deputy had to mount the tribune and declare his vote. To face the Mountain and the mob and still vote for the

king's reprieve was in most cases too much for human courage. Once more fear triumphed. Louis Seize was sentenced to die. It was the knell of the Girondist party.

How could she console him? That was Marie's first thought when she saw the haggard face of Buzot after the terrible session was over. For he knew what she knew. After this it was a losing fight for the moderates against the tyranny of violence. Together they looked the situation in the face. That's what Buzot wanted of her—just her presence, her silence, her complete understanding. The mind of this woman, like her heart, was united to his own and she was equal to that last test of courage—unshaken ardor for a cause now doomed. Closer than ever they drew, too close. Madame Roland felt her hold weaken, felt herself sway into that abyss of happiness where she longed to drop.

On the afternoon of the twenty-second of January Louvet de Couvrai in great distress sought out Madame Roland in her cabinet. As he came down the corridor he found François Buzot just entering her door and followed close behind him. Madame Roland was alone and hard at work. Her welcoming glance was grave.

"What is this, madame, that Roland has just told me?" asked Louvet anxiously. "What is the matter with your husband? Only four days ago he was full of fight. At his orders I posted in the *Sentinel* that challenge to his enemies beginning, 'I await dismissal or massacre and I demand to be judged!' Four days ago—and now! Is he dis-

couraged because no Girondist dares bring on that supreme debate? After their recent defeat they simply cannot do it! Can you not rally his spirits, bring him to reason?"

Buzot stared from one to the other. "But of what are you speaking? What has Roland done?"

Louvet answered him. "He is handing in his resignation tomorrow. He is leaving the ministry."

Madame Roland's eyes were fixed on some distant image and her lovely voice rang strangely, "Yes, he is resigning. I am even now drafting the letter for Vergniaud to read before the deputies. We have agreed about it. It seems best."

Louvet and Buzot gazed upon her in astonishment. Then the former broke out again. "But, madame, don't you realize that this is just what your enemies desire? Don't you know what they will say? Yesterday Louis Sixteenth went to his death on the scaffold. Tomorrow Roland resigns. It looks like protest against the regicide. Danton and his band will be sure to think Roland loved the king too well. They will call him a traitor."

Marie's eyes rested on Louvet with the same fixed gravity. "Yes. I wished him to delay his action for a time. But he would not and I could not insist. His health is much impaired by all this strain and his spirit, his spirit——" She broke off. Her hands clasped together convulsively. Her face looked tortured.

"Ah!" Louvet's whole tone and manner changed. "Dear madam, I say no more. I am sorry. He will be missed. You—may I say it?—will be missed

even more. Why—I can hardly think—it seems impossible! You, not here? You in private life again?"

She smiled then. "Very private, indeed. It will be dangerous for my friends to see me. But," she shrugged, "perhaps there will be more peace for us. That commodity has been singularly lacking here." She rose and held out her hand to Louvet with a word and a look of affection. Deeply moved, he carried it to his lips, and with a final gesture of despair and sorrow left the room.

Instantly Buzot was beside her. "What is it? Why is Roland taking this sudden step?"

Their eyes met in a long, searching look. Then with lips which had begun to tremble she replied, "Oh, my loved one, it has been too much for me. I was afraid. I had to have some bitter ingredient to harden my soul. And so, so I—I told Roland —told him—all."

Buzot's slender frame quivered with the shock. "You told him about—us?" Then a sudden light flashed over his face. "Do you—could you mean ——?"

"*Non, non, non!* Never. I assured my husband I would keep my faith with him, with Honor all my life—that I would not deceive him, not even by cherishing in secret what I feel for you. Oh, it was cruel of me. I know it. From now on he will be tortured. So shall I. But I was at the end. It was either that or ——" With a sob she sank into Buzot's arms.

Next day before the Convention Vergniaud read

the resignation of the minister of the Interior. The Girondists accepted it, their regrets tempered by the hope that Joseph Garat, whom they transferred to Roland's place from the ministry of Justice, would prove a less contentious administrator. The Mountain, true to Louvet's prediction, howled its accusations and declared that Roland's going meant his guilt. Threats rained upon his head. From the mansion of the ministry to Cauchois's house on the rue de la Harpe the menace of his enemies pursued him.

To retire was not to escape. No, he escaped nothing. His public life was over. His private life was ruined at a stroke. Where now was its meaning and that sweet serenity which had been joined to him just thirteen years ago in the old church of Saint-Barthélemy? That he who had been loved so well should be loved no longer! Oh, why cling to life at all? Only for one hope. If he could get away, return to Le Clos things might be—well, less unbearable. There Marie would have but a haunting image to set between them, not a living presence.

But how to get away? He could not get his passports from the Commune until the Convention accepted his reports and answered his accusers. And this it would not do. Letter after letter did Roland send to Garat, his successor, insisting upon action. Over and over he demanded a hearing at the tribune. He sounded Brissot, pleaded with his friends, but all in vain. The Girondists were engaged in a life and death struggle with the Mountain and the fate of a minister no longer in office had to wait for a

time when they had achieved a foothold on the field.

These were bitter months, bitter for everyone. The execution of Louis Sixteenth had brought down upon France the hostility of all Europe. Bourbon Spain broke off relations. England engaged in hostile acts. Holland declared war, and Dumouriez promptly crossed the Dutch border with his army of invasion. Disorder in Lyons continued and uproar began in the strongly Catholic district of the Vendée. From such terrors and confusion only the Mountain knew how to profit. Now dominating the Plain and acting as one with the Commune, it created the Committee of Public Safety with absolute authority over suspects. Controlled by Robespierre, this group came gradually to exercise over the entire nation a dictatorship of ferocity.

To no one, however, was the world more full of dreadfulness than to Madame Roland. Whatever her own trials, her generous heart would have known some impersonal, proud triumph if the Republic she had worked so hard to build had stood sane and solid before her. But distorting hands of violence had made of it a crazy edifice which threatened to collapse at any moment and bury under it every patriotic hope she had.

For herself she had none. Her brief day of leadership was over and her domestic tranquillity at an end. Once pressed by a thousand duties, she had nothing to distract her attention from griefs and disappointments. Each long, empty day was an

unrelieved inquisition. There in the apartment, which seemed so cramped and small, she couldn't so much as leave the *salon* without pursuit of Roland's challenge. His furious doubt involved her every act and word. "Do I deserve such punishment?" she wondered. That she herself had roused it made her husband's jealousy no easier to endure. For one who had always moved with freedom and spoken with candor to become an object of harassing suspicion was suffering beyond expression.

One single ray pierced this darkness. And that came now but fitfully. She could see François Buzot only on occasions. But what moments of healing they brought! Wandering together through the dusky streets in the moist twilight of early spring or watching from one of the bridges the swirl of the turbulent river, they were like melancholy ghosts escaped from Purgatory for one hour of living happiness.

"Strange," said Buzot once, "how I somehow associate you with the river. I have crossed it so often to see you and never once without thinking that you are like it—the same, but always new, purposeful, but of ever changing mood."

"Not so strange," she murmured, brushing back a bright wisp of hair from a cheek which the wind had touched with rose. "All my life except for ten brief years has been spent within a tiny circle cleft by this familiar stream. I grew up beside it. It is part of me. I have often called myself a daughter of the Seine."

Usually in broken snatches these two talked of the horrors going on about them. Buzot was still champion of the measures she believed in, voice of the sentiments she felt. When he leveled his lance of words at Danton or Marat he thrust for her as well as for himself. They were brave for one another. For their peril was almost equal. Buzot was named in all the accusations delivered by the Mountain and warnings of certain attack still drove the Rolands forth to spend the night with friends. "If we could only die together!" they would whisper.

Madame Roland's prediction to Louvet that it would be dangerous for her friends to see her was quite literally true. Often the house was watched. Yet in their sorrowful exile the Rolands were not quite deserted. Louvet saw them frequently and so did Barbaroux. As for Bancal, Champagneux, and Louis Bosc their devotion remained unchanged. Lanthenas, however, came no more. Even his bitter letters finally ceased. Bosc, whose fury at the man's desertion of both the party and the friends who had made him knew no bounds, elicited from Madame Roland this comment of quiet sternness: "Lanthenas isn't bold and ruthless enough to be really of the Mountain nor has he the courage to fight against them. He is nothing, his politics are less."

By the middle of March reverses in Holland brought General Dumouriez under the suspicion of the Mountain and the Commune. They had no tolerance for generals who failed. Success or

punishment was their cry! On the thirtieth of that month they sent a commission to the north to report back on his good faith. It was headed by Bancal des Issarts. When he came to bid his friends good-bye Marie took both his hands in hers and looked at him with swimming eyes. Farewells were farewells in those days. And yet she was almost glad to see him go—one friend, at least, escaped from the danger which her fatal presence radiated.

In vain her ardent wishes for him! Three days after his departure Champagneux with stricken face came to see the Rolands. "Always the harbinger of bad news am I!" he warned them. "Bancal has been betrayed. Our brave and loyal friend has been handed over to the Austrians and is now imprisoned by them." Who did this foul thing? How could it be? Had Dumouriez decided to be what they thought he was?

No one could answer. But certainly there was lightning from every quarter of the heavens. The Rolands, too, had news. An armed force had come to their house, searched it and seized the papers of the former minister. Champagneux was aghast. Was there anything which could be thought incriminating among the documents? Roland shook his head. His long face looked more drawn, more sallow than ever. No, he told his friend, nothing which the Committee of Public Safety wanted. Apparently that body had wished to find him involved with the suspected general. But not one line to him had Roland written since the beginning of the fatal campaign in Holland.

Not the faintest warning, however, had come to most of France. The country reeled from the shock of learning on April fifth that Dumouriez had sold out to the enemy. Furious with that party of suspicion which gave him orders, reduced his power, heckled him beyond endurance in the midst of battles, the general had thrown up his hands. Never a revolutionist by temperament or by profound conviction, he had a pride which could not brook such interference. When flattering offers came from across the border, came when his self-love was wounded worst, he hardly hesitated. He fairly flung himself into the arms of the French aristocrats and their enemy allies.

Picture then the wild turmoil at the capital! Once more the terrible rounds of suspicion, accusation, attack, and imprisonment. No quarry, but was hunted out. Even Danton was in momentary peril. Dumouriez's friend had to move quickly to shake himself free of complicity with the traitor. Some act of violence would serve best and what victims more welcome than those men who in their attempt to check the Commune had always aimed their darts at him. With a howl of vengeful glee he fell upon the Girondists.

But he was too late. Robespierre was there before him. At the Convention and at the Jacobin Club formal accusations of treachery were presented against the principal Girondists. Danton could but fall in line and prove his patriotism by the lustiness of his blows.

Helpless, detached, Madame Roland watched her

friends in that wild arena which the Convention had become. She was one with them, however, in spirit. "Never will they show the white feather!" she exulted. And, indeed, in early April the Brissotins had a moment of successful retaliation. They accused Marat of fomenting civil war. He was tried, sentenced, imprisoned. "One act of pure justice in a blackened period!" cried Madame Roland to Buzot. But the mob thought otherwise. With such vigor did they protest to the Committee of Public Safety and the Criminal Tribunal that before long they got the judgment reversed. Open flew the prison doors and Marat, "the People's Friend," Marat, the martyr, was carried in triumph to the Convention on the shoulders of his followers. There, framed in wreaths of flowers, that monstrous face looked down upon its enemies and laughed upon their impotence.

After that the party of decency and moderation lost its last gleam of hope. Brissot's courage, Vergniaud's eloquence, the dogged efforts of twenty men like Buzot could not restore their old authority. Nor was their former minister forgotten by the enemy. Late in April Camille Desmoulins published a brochure devoted to an elaborate attack on Roland's ministry. Roland's wife could fathom this faithful ire which pursued them in innocent retirement. Those men found in her continued presence in Paris just one more potent reason for the sustained vigor of opposition to the Mountain. She thought, "I am constantly a danger to my friends. I must leave this place somehow—no mat-

ter what it costs!" Yet, even as she resolved to do so, her heart grew faint. To be away in the safe shelter of Le Clos and leave Buzot in his moment of greatest need of her—ah, could she really bear it?

Roland rejoiced at her decision. Yes, if she went first and took Eudora his chance of getting away from Paris by fair means or secret enterprise would be far greater. Forthwith they applied at the Commune for passports for Madame Roland, Eudora, and Marguerite Fleury. Passports ought to get them through the lines thrown round Villefranche and once at Le Clos with their friendly country-folk they would be safe enough. With trembling lips Marie told her lover of the plan. He said his heart would be the lighter for knowing of her safety.

Leaning upon his arm, as they walked along the *quai* beside the Seine, Madame Roland said to Buzot: "Danton hates me in particular. Surely it will be better for you all when I am gone. I think of that and of Eudora. I do not think of the years before me. Ah, my beloved, may they not be many!"

He replied, "It is best for you to go. I don't know how much longer I could go on this way, seeing you as one sees a rainbow—only to have it fade in mist. Yes,"—he bent upon her a look of passionate yearning—"I am ungrateful. Though I have had so much, my heart's treasure, yet am I unsatisfied."

It was cruel of the chestnut buds to open so early that May of 1793, cruel of the willows on the Pont-

Neuf before Madame Roland's home of childhood to wave their silken banners so softly in the breeze. There should have been no reminder of gentleness and beauty and peace. For the minds of men had to be made of steel these days. Hopeless, but undaunted, Brissot and the men still loyal to the lost cause were gathering for their last great charge upon the dictators. They appointed from amongst themselves a committee of twelve to inquire into the illegal acts of the Commune, empowered to arrest its chiefs. They knew the Commune would retaliate, but they were desperate. Perhaps if they could prove their case before the country, the provinces might rise to challenge Paris and sweep murder and anarchy from the government.

"We shall fight to the very end," said Buzot to Marie. "But if we lose we shall try to escape to various parts of France and there tell the people how Paris would annihilate the delegates of the nation." A flicker of hope sprang up in her heart to hear him.

Nevertheless, she wondered if this new Girondist battle would prevent her leaving Paris. The application for the passports was not granted. Perfidious delay after delay. They were all packed and ready, Eudora, Fleury, and she. Roland's fixed glance seemed to grow more suspicious as if intentionally she lingered on. Oh, would this caged life never end? Yet how deeply she could admire her husband even so. Here he was, disillusioned, alone, without support, working like fury on a retort to Camille Desmoulins. She begged to help him with

it and he consented grudgingly. Once more Bosc found them in the yellow drawing-room busily engaged with pen and paper.

Suddenly on the twenty-sixth of May the passports were delivered. Eudora and Fleury gazed at them excitedly. Roland's face cleared. "Nothing will stop you now," he said, and then he bit his lip as if he thought for the first time that this might mean a long separation between him and the wife he adored. To Madame Roland, however, those papers meant but one thing. It was over. After her last farewell with him—and she would have it, come what might—she would never again in this world see François Buzot.

But that was not what her dark eyes told him when he kept the rendezvous she named. They said, Forever, Forever, Forever! She thought, "His look, his voice, the gentle melancholy which is the essence of him—these are part of me. I am part of him." Upon her his eyes rested as if they were noting every detail of her face. "This is not parting," they said to one another. "We cannot separate." One last embrace, one final murmured word of love. "Courage, heart of my heart!"—such was their adieu.

From that farewell her feet unbidden found their way back, across the court and up to the bedroom where the waiting Fleury caught her in her arms. "*Mon Dieu*, madame! What is it? You are ill!" She was. For three days she lay stricken, battling with her weakness, seeing with half-shut eyes how Roland's glance condemned her for it.

The second day she saw Louis Bosc for a moment. His anxious face bent over her in such extreme concern and sympathy that it flashed across her he might know her secret. How? Had he guessed it or had Lanthenas told him in a rage? As if to divert him, she asked quickly, "What is happening?"

Bosc shook his head. "It goes from bad to worse. The Commune's mob is winning the Convention. They've forced the suppression of Brissot's committee of twelve and are demanding the resignation of the entire Gironde. Even now a few of them are trying to get out of the city. But Brissot and the others—Vergniaud, Pétion, Barbaroux, Buzot,"—Bosc leaned upon the last name—"all the fighting line stands firm. They won't resign. They hope still to touch some spark of conscience somewhere in that assembly and in Paris."

The two friends sounded each other's eyes for some ray of hope. "Ah!" she fell back sighing. "Thus ends the Republic. Tyranny is dead, long live another tyranny—such is the voice of the mob." She closed her eyes.

"Try to get better, dear madame. You should leave Paris, leave at once," said Bosc and went away.

On the thirty-first of May she struggled up, dressed with the aid of Fleury, and walked into the *salon* to find Roland. He was standing with a journal in his hand. The face he swiftly turned towards her was strained and anxious.

"When can you leave?" he asked abruptly. "Is it possible today?"

Before she could speak there came through the open window a sound which froze her blood. There was Roland's answer! The tocsin's wild peal, the distant sound of a gun! It was the Commune which replied and the message was, "Too late!" Madame Roland could not leave Paris today. She? Why, even at that moment the mob was storming the Convention demanding vengeance on her party, her friends, the traitors who had dared to question the leaders of the people. What need had the Commune of reasons? Its innocence was proved by pikes and bayonets in the hands of sturdy *Sans-Culottes*. "Out with the Gironde! They are traitors to a man!"

What was it? Where was Buzot? Madame Roland sank down faintly. She sent her husband off for news, tried to calm the fears of Eudora and Fleury, and lifted a mask-like face upon Roland's return. He told what he had heard; the city was in an uproar, some arrests were being made, but so far violence was rather of word than deed. Then the kind proprietors, Monsieur and Madame Cauchois sent to invite Eudora to the shelter of their apartment for the rest of the day and the child went off with Fleury.

At three o'clock Louis Bosc rushed in, his face worn with anxiety. "I couldn't get near the Convention," he said. "There must be twenty thousand people around it and most of them are armed. I was told a debate was going on—*debate*, mind you, when

one could hear the bawling of the mob inside for a quarter of a league! At least there is no bloodshed, my friends! I'm going on to see Madame Brissot and if I hear what is happening I'll come back."

Waiting, waiting, with Roland's eyes upon her, guessing her anguish! Oh, if she couldn't do something she would go mad!

Suddenly at half-past five there came the sound of feet tramping in the court. The bell was viciously pulled. Madame Roland sprang to her feet and laid her hand on her husband's arm. "Oh, my friend," she whispered, "our turn has come at last!" Roland strode to the door and the next instant six armed men were in the room.

"Citizen Roland, we have here an order by virtue of which we arrest you!"

At the words all Madame Roland's vitality seemed to rush back. She flung up her head to confront the man who had spoken. In his hand he held a paper with the red seal of the Commune. In silence Roland took it and calmly read it through.

Finally he looked up with all the detachment of a legal expert and said, "I know no law which constitutes the authority you cite and I shall obey no order from that source. If you employ violence I can only offer you the resistance of a man of my age, but I shall protest against it to the last instant."

The leader looked round upon his fellows, profoundly puzzled by this statement. "I have no order to employ violence," he said slowly. "I'd better deliver your reply to the Council of the Commune. Meanwhile, I'll leave my colleagues here."

Turning on his heel, he walked away, and behind him as far as the hallway marched the others.

Bounding forward, Madame Roland closed the door upon them. She and her husband exchanged for the first time in four months a look of profound confidence and affection. Danger united them and each felt a strange elation. "While the leader is gone," said Marie in a vibrant undertone, "I shall fly to the Convention to protest this action. Perhaps we can get the order stopped in time." Roland assented with a look.

Madame Roland swooped down before her desk. "I'll dash off a note to the president and take it with me." In a few moments she handed him the missive to read while she ran in to snatch a hat, veil, and black shawl. "Don't be anxious. I'll take a cab." With swift affection she embraced him and then quietly descended the stairs.

When the *concierge* had put her in the carriage, she cried to the *cocher*, "To the Place Carrousel—and as fast as possible!"

The court of the Tuileries was full of armed men, but Madame Roland lightly as a bird threaded her way between them and arrived at the door of the Convention hall. When the sentinel wouldn't let her enter, she suddenly assumed the air and language of a *devotée* of the Mountain: "Ah, but citizen, in this day of safety for the country you know not of what import might be the note I have for the president." The ruse succeeded. She was at once passed through to the petitioner's hall. But there, although she gave her missive to the one guard she recognized,

she was kept pacing up and down for an hour before he at last returned. The din inside was deafening.

"Well, I can't get the president's attention. The tumult is incredible," declared the guard.

Then she summoned Vergniaud and after a long time he came out to see her. He looked like a soldier just emerged from the battlefield. "It is all up with the opposition," he told her. "Nobody is standing by us. They are still trying to down us by argument, but we know that Marat has listed us for arrest." He listened then to the tale of the attempted arrest of Roland. "Your note can't possibly be read for an hour and a half," he told her.

"Then I shall return to see what's happened and come back here later."

Once more she secured a cab, but when it was held up by the passing of an armed force she paid the coachman, leaped out, skipped between the ranks of passing soldiers and ran the rest of the way to her house on foot. The *concierge* stopped her in the court. "Monsieur your husband is with the proprietor." But when she reached the Cauchois' she found Roland had already gone.

Her friends made her sit down and take a glass of wine. They told her what they knew—that the leader of the armed force had not been able to get further orders, that Roland had continued to protest the mandate with such success that the good constabulary had at last retired. "Your husband left the apartment then, passed through here and went out of the building by the rear gate. He is hiding with friends nearby—we don't know where."

In spite of Madame Cauchois' protest, Madame Roland thereupon went out to find her husband. First one house, then another, up and down long flights of steps! At last they were in one another's arms, both talking at once in their excitement and relief! Roland was not to return to his house, but to hide until he could make his escape from Paris, toward Rouen, probably. He would send word through his friend, the artist Pasquier.

"I'll stop and see Pasquier on my way back from another visit to the Convention," said Madame Roland, "and send you a message by Fleury if I cannot come myself. Without doubt the Commune will send another deputation later, this time equipped with an order to use force. You must start tomorrow, if possible."

Trembling with emotion, she rose to take leave of her husband. This man, whom for thirteen years she had cared for with such tender solicitude, was now facing alone the unspeakable hardships, the danger, the terror of a refugee. She might never see him again! A sob rose in her throat and her whole being was swept by a great wave of tenderness. At that very moment she saw him stiffen, heard from his lips the old jealous questions, the old outburst of bitterness. Alas! She couldn't stay to listen or she would be too late for the Convention. With a swift embrace she broke away, looked back, and tried to smile. But his face of somber doubt still fixed her reproachfully and such was to be her last memory of Roland de la Platière.

In a few moments she was once more in a cab on

the way to the Place Carrousel. It was now past ten o'clock. She had had almost nothing to eat, she was in a dripping perspiration from her exertions, this was the first day she had been out of bed for three days—and yet she felt no fatigue. All her faculties seemed abnormally keen.

To her amazement the square was empty, the vast crowd gone. Two cannon and a few guards were left before the hall of the Convention. She was told the session was over. Hardly could she believe it. What? On a day of insurrection? Determined to find out what had happened, she again assumed her rôle of Commune sympathizer. Addressing an old *Sans-Culotte* beside the cannon, she asked: "Citizen, has everything gone off well?"

"Oh, marvelously. The deputies embraced each other and sang the hymn of the Marseillais."

"Was the party of the Right completely crushed?"

"*Parbleu!* It was, indeed, restored to reason."

"And the commission of twelve?"

"Ah, the municipality are going to have them arrested."

"Good! Can it do so?"

"*Diable!* Isn't it all-powerful? It must do so to suppress the traitors and sustain the Republic."

"I suppose the provinces will be delighted to find their representatives arrested!"

With these words, Marie who had been strolling along as she talked, signaled her cab and was about to get in when she became aware that a dog was pressing close against her skirts. There followed,

with the exchange between her and the driver of the cab, so strange a little interlude amidst the terrible anxiety of this night that Madame Roland afterwards set it down in a passage which became famous.

"Is that poor animal yours?" the coachman asked me with a tone of sympathetic concern very rare in his sort.

"No, I do not know him," said I gravely, quite as if it were the question of a person and already thinking of something else. "Please stop at the galleries of the Louvre," said I for I wished to see a friend about the means to get Roland out of Paris.

But we had not gone twenty paces when the carriage stopped. "What's the matter?" I asked the coachman.

"Ah, he left me like a fool when I wanted to keep him for my little boy who would be so pleased. Doggie! Doggie! Come here."

I thought it sweet and pleasant to have for a driver at that hour a good man. "Try to catch him," I cried. "You shall put him into the carriage and I shall keep him for you." The good fellow, delighted, took the dog, opened the door and gave me a companion. The poor beast seemed to feel that it had found protection and shelter and I was enthusiastically caressed.

Pasquier, the friend whom I wished to consult, had just gone to bed, but he got up and I made my proposition. We decided that he should come to my house next day at seven o'clock and I should tell him where to conduct his friend. Then I returned to my carriage, but it was stopped by the sentinel at the Samaritaine.

"A little patience," said the coachman, turning round to me. "It is the custom at this hour."

The sergeant arrived and opened the door. "Who is there?"

"A citizen."

"Whence do you come?"

"From the Convention."

"That is indeed true," interpolated the coachman as if he feared they wouldn't believe me.

"Where are you going?"

"To my house."

"Have you no packets?"

"I have nothing, look!"

"But the Convention session is finished."

"Yes, which provoked me sorely, for I had a petition to make."

"A woman? At this hour? It is inconceivable! It is very imprudent! But, madame, all alone?"

"How can you say that, monsieur? Alone? Do you not see with me Innocence and Truth? What more is necessary?"

"Well, I yield to your reasons."

"You do well," I replied in a gentler tone. "For they are good."

But even after the weary horses finally brought her to her door the night was not over for this woman. When she had spoken to Fleury and had kissed Eudora with a quiet word of reassurance, she sat down to write a note to Buzot. Hardly had she picked up her pen, however, when there came a knock on the door. The maid, who had absolutely refused to go to bed, answered the summons and admitted a large deputation from the Commune. They demanded Roland. Calmly Madame Roland faced them and assured them that her husband was not at home.

"But, where is he? Where might he be? When will he return?"

"My husband left here while I was at the Convention. He couldn't confide his plans to me in my

absence and I know nothing but what I have told you."

The band withdrew, but Madame Roland, stealing a glance through the curtains, saw that a sentinel had been left at her door and a guard in the court below. It was now after midnight. She finished her note, gave it to Fleury to be delivered next day, and at last went to bed. Such was her exhaustion that she instantly fell into a deep sleep.

Suddenly she felt a touch on her shoulder. "Madame! Madame!" It was Fleury, half-dressed, pale with alarm. Madame Roland sat up. "What is it?" She glanced at the clock. She had slept just one hour.

"Several men from the section who beg you to see them in the next room."

"From the section?" Madame Roland felt a weird thrill. Her body stiffened. Instinctively she closed her eyes against the frightened glance of Fleury. This visit could mean but one thing. Her own arrest! She was to be a hostage for her husband. Prison! This was prison! Swiftly she flung off the covers and said, "I know what this means, Fleury. Go tell them I shall be with them presently."

So calmly had she spoken that when the maid came back and found her fully dressed Fleury cried out in alarm. "Yes, my dear Fleury," she replied, fastening with careful fingers a fresh ruffle round the neck of her frock, "I must be dressed decently and ready to leave the house. Come here, my friend, do not weep." Marie took Fleury's face in her

cool hands. "It isn't serious. I'm not at all afraid." She left her with a smile.

The room was full. Police officers and armed men stood about. Noise on the stairs outside announced the presence of other people crowding up. "We have come, citizen, to arrest you," said the captain of the band.

In vain, like Roland, she protested. This time they were prepared. Both Roland and his wife—although no motive for arrest was given—were to be taken, by force if necessary, to prison and their house officially sealed up. Already the sectional judge of the peace was on his way. Madame Roland looked at the warrants, she listened to the statements. She watched the crowd pushing in behind the peace officer until her little place was crammed with people. Curious eyes observed her. Dirty fingers pawed her belongings. The room grew stifling. Hours passed by while the officers checked and listed. Seals were affixed to her pretty furniture, her piano, her desk where so often she had written to her lover. There was nothing she could do. It was like a dream of passiveness in horror. At last, long after dawn she was told to make a package of what she wished to take with her.

Not for one moment did Madame Roland lose her calm. She was able to comfort Eudora, quiet the frightened Fleury and impress upon her what she was to do. The child was to be taken at once to some dear friends nearby whose house would be safe. They were Monsieur and Madame Creuzé-Latouche. "I shall write immediately to Monsieur

Bosc d'Antic," said Marie, "and I am sure he will come to help arrange all details." Even when she embraced her little girl and the weeping maid, she did not break down. She assured them she would be held only for a short time.

Between armed guards of the Commune Madame Roland descended the steps to the court and passed down the aisle made for her by two files of soldiers across the street to a waiting cab. A huge crowd had collected. She stepped daintily and made no haste. Her head was carried proudly.

She entered the carriage and a guard got in on each side of her. The file of soldiers followed on behind. So did the crowd. Jeers and exclamations rose in air. Suddenly a voice shouted fiercely, "To the guillotine!" The shout was taken up. Hearing them Marie's heart contracted, but in pity, not in fear. Poor ignorants! How bitterly they were deceived! How led astray!

"Shall I lower the curtain, madame?" asked one of the guards, with a glance of sympathy at the charming face beside him.

"No, monsieur, I have nothing to fear from the regard of anyone."

"Hah! You have more character than many men!" The guard looked all his admiration. "You await justice peaceably."

Her eyes flashed then and she tossed back her head. "Justice!" she repeated with superb scorn.

Slowly moved the small procession toward Saint-Germain-des-Prés. At every step it bore the woman who had lived so freely, loved liberty so well,

nearer and nearer to the toils from which she was never to escape. Twenty-four hours ago she had been ready to start for the freedom of Le Clos. Now Madame Roland was a prisoner of the Commune and her destination was the Abbaye.

Chapter Nine

"TODAY on the throne, tomorrow in irons." Madame Roland laid down her pen and looked about her. Surrounded by dirty walls which were pierced by one thickly grilled window, she was established in a cell just large enough to hold a narrow bed, a table and a chair. An evil odor penetrated her fastidious nostrils. Outside her door she could hear the scraping of iron doors, constant footsteps and an occasional sobbing cry. Below the window a dog bayed mournfully. She was, indeed, in prison.

But she was happy. Yes, happy and free. The awful struggle was over. She breathed with the heavenly relief of an exhausted swimmer suddenly pulled from the rapids. It was bliss to be alone, to have no terrible decisions hanging over her, to be outside them all—passions, duties, responsibilities. She who would never have fled from her turbulent destiny had escaped it in the one way satisfying to her conscience. Wasn't she bearing this prison sentence for some one else? If the Commune had her, they might well let Roland go. Reprieve for them both! Could any stroke of fate have been more felicitous all around?

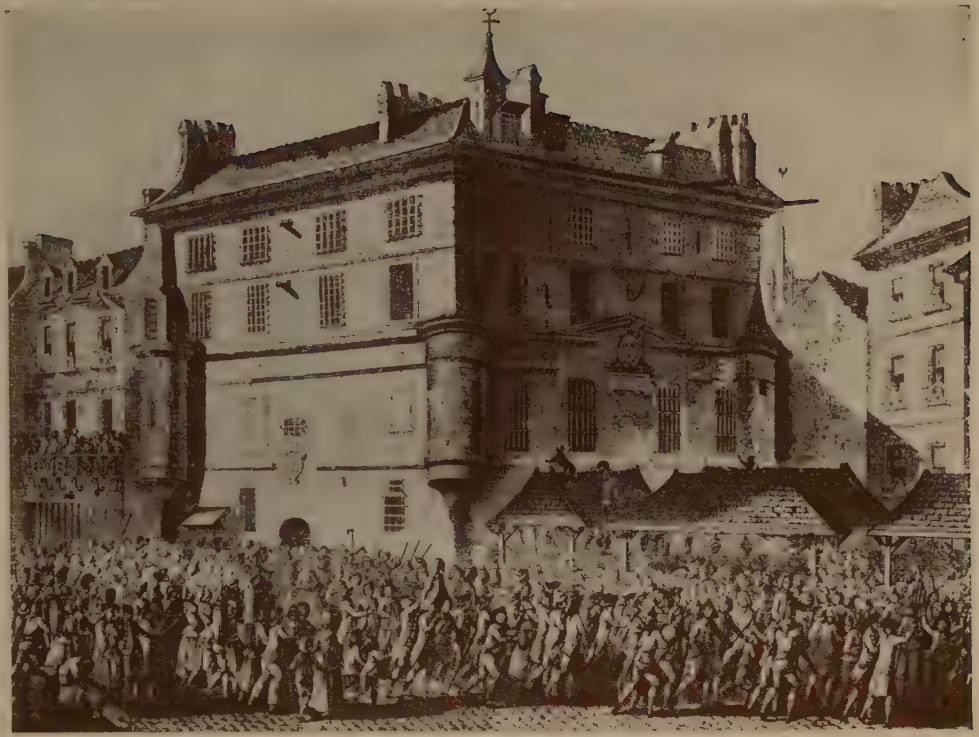
Even as she passed the sentry at the Abbaye gate she had felt it. No wonder the marveling jailer's

wife had said, "Few women who come here have an air as serene as yours, madame."

What a day! First all the red tape of being registered and arranged for. Then a visit from the prison inspector, an employee of Roland's and an excellent man, named Grandpré. There was a friend at court! With his official access to her and his deep concern for her welfare he would do all he could to help. She had sat down immediately at his advice to write a letter to the National Convention, a stern and eloquent protest against the abomination of her arrest. Oh, she meant to fight against this evil act on principle. Grandpré had come back for the missive and promised to deliver it.

After that she had been escorted to this cell which they had prepared. She had dined on prison fare. And now she was writing to that dear and faithful friend, Louis Bosc. What a blow it would be to him, her arrest. She must comfort him by hinting how she felt. "Here as elsewhere I am sufficiently at peace with myself not to suffer from changes." Now she must write to Marguerite Fleury to come at once to see her. And after that she could sleep. What, sleep? At the Abbaye where but nine months ago prisoners had been dragged from their beds and murdered by hired assassins of the very men who had sent her here? Wasn't that the tocsin sounding now? Perhaps not. No matter anyway. Let them come and cut her throat if they so willed. She was too tired to care.

Next morning she stayed in bed till noon. Grandpré, who came with sympathetic questions found



A REVOLUTIONARY MOB BEFORE THE ABBAYE PRISON

her there. He had seen Champagneux and said that staunch friend, stricken to the heart to learn of her arrest, was coming soon to see her.

Madame Roland rose, dressed, arranged her books—an English dictionary, Thompson's poems, Plutarch, and David Hume. Then Fleury came to fling herself sobbing into the arms of her mistress. The latter was conscience-stricken. "How selfish of me to be so contented here," she thought, "when those who love me suffer on my account." But next morning her peace was broken. The jailer brought her a journal which announced the formal decree of arrest for the twenty-two Girondists. The paper fell from her hands. "My country is lost!" she cried aloud, and in her heart was one terrible question. Was Buzot lost, too?

No one came to tell her. She saw only deputations from the Commune—men with oily, unkempt hair and dirty badges. "Has the citizen any complaint to make?" "Yes, of being here." "Any request?" "To be set free." Never should Danton guess he'd done her any favor. She wrote to that Paris section where she lived, one friendly to Roland, to ask that a deputation go to the Convention and demand a proper hearing for her who had had none. The section, she afterwards learned wished to send the protest, but was persuaded not to do so by other sections more loyal to the Commune.

She wrote to an intrepid fighter in the Convention, a friend of Barbaroux, and Claude de Perret folded the note and wrote a warm, admiring word

on the other side to say he would do all he could. Letters of hers followed to the minister of Justice and the timid Garat, Roland's successor. To Dulaure, editor of the *Daily Thermometer*, she sent a copy of her first letter to the Convention and the brave editor published it. Oh, yes, she fought on principle. The woman loved by Buzot could do no less.

At last she'd had some word about him. Louis Bosc had brought it. When he had wiped away the tears which started at the sight of his glorious friend in that wretched place, he blurted briefly: "Roland has got away from Paris. So has Buzot."

Even in her wild surge of relief Madame Roland noticed Bosc's sure selection of the news she most desired. He knew—there was no doubt of it. "Oh, my dear Bosc! Thank God!" She pressed his hand and a sob of joy tore at her throat.

Bosc turned to the window, giving her time, and said softly over his shoulder, naming no names, that Roland had found shelter in the little house in Montmorency which had been bought for Bancal. From there, as soon as feasible, he would make his way to Rouen to his friends, the Malorties. Buzot had gone southwest toward Caen. Pétion had started for Normandy. Guadet, Barbaroux, Louvet, and another had also made their escape. Brissot, too, at last! He'd had to wait three days to get sufficient money to start. "Imagine that!" gasped Bosc. "What contrast to a Danton enriched with plunder in Belgium!" Lanthenas, who already had made terms with the enemy, had been let off. Marat

struck him off the list of victims, saying he was too weak of spirit to matter. "He knows you're here in prison," concluded Bosc. "I had him told. Now if he is a man you'll hear from him!"

Eudora was reported doing very well. Madame Creuzé-Latouche already adored her. She was sensible and not too worried. "*Your* child, she is!" said Bosc. "Brave and true as steel."

As Marie clasped his hands in farewell with tears of thanks, she said: "After all, my friend, who is the only person to be pitied in my family? Roland! Roland, in hiding and in constant fear not only of discovery, but of implicating the friends who give him shelter. My heart goes out to my poor husband continually. As for me, with such news as you have brought I am—content."

The young man went away marveling. He said to Champagneux, "She positively looks more radiant now than for months past. And her toilette is as fresh as ever."

Champagneux and Bosc came often to see their captive friend. The one brought books, the other flowers, until her cell looked like a room and the admiring jailer dubbed it "Flora's pavilion." Both of them were overjoyed when she told them she was writing sketches of the public men she'd known and comment on the revolution as she'd lived through it. She called the whole her *Notices Historiques.* Champagneux took the sheets off with him as she wrote them for safe-keeping and praised the writing warmly. Furthermore, he was struggling with

his new chief, Garat, to get some action from him on her case.

Madame Roland had decided that she would make of prison life a means of discovering to what extent the human will could dominate the habits of the flesh. She resolved, except for her prized privacy, to live like the poorest prisoner. According to the system of that day each individual in prison had to pay his board. The municipality offered nothing but a roof and a heap of straw. Two pounds a week was charged for the regular prison fare and anything in addition required further outlay of money. If you had a bed and a room to yourself it was at your own expense. Any service you received must also be paid for and there were plenty of minor officials eager to batten on wealthy prisoners. Already these servitors had fixed expectant eyes upon the charmingly dressed woman with her aristocratic diction who had been admitted on June first. But she was resolved to keep their good will by a method of her own.

First she decided to train herself to live on the prison ration. Gradually she substituted for the breakfast rolls and chocolate, which had their special price, the bread and water included in the board bill. For lunch she had the prison ration of meat and vegetables and for supper the prison ration of vegetables with no dessert. Watery, tasteless fare after Fleury's culinary art, but not impossible to eat. Instead of wine she took beer for a few days until she trained herself to do without it, then nothing but water. The money saved by such dis-

ciplinary measures she gave to prisoners too poor to buy beds and extra food. She required no service, but herself made the bed and ordered the cell. Tips to the prison domestics she did give, but these were therefore altogether gratuitous. This Spartan régime pleased her independent soul and on it she thrived. She thrived, also, on the knowledge that her simple donations had brought her the good will of everyone.

The sweetness of her solitude never palled. In reading, writing, receiving visits, the days passed swiftly. She told herself that if she had been safe and comfortable she could hardly have borne these days for the Republic, governed now only by cut-throats, nor could she have faced the fate to which her friends were all exposed. But, likewise a victim, she could be brave for all. Then came the news that Brissot had been caught and was to be brought back to Paris. A terrible blow! A dual blow! Not only did she tremble to think of Brissot's fate, but after that cherished less hope that somewhere in France might begin a countermovement against anarchy. Furthermore, if Brissot was captured ——! Her heart stood still to think who might be the next victim.

But, at last! Forever unforgettable, forever blessed that twenty-second of June which brought her heart's desire. A letter from Buzot! Madame Goussard brought it, a friend of the Pétions. And Marie, grateful beyond any words for the woman's devotion, was torn between the desire to have her stay and the longing to have her gone. For, al-

though it obviously seemed strange to the bearer of it, that letter could not be read in the presence of another. It must be savored line by line, pressed a dozen times to eager lips, reread and slipped down against her heart. Now she could write to him—the underground postal system was established.

She told him all her news. "Would you believe that hypocrite Pache sent word that he was much touched by my situation? 'Go tell him that I refuse to receive this insulting compliment. I prefer to be his victim than the object of his politeness. It dishonors me'—such was my response." She told her "well-beloved" her heart was tranquil.

Hardly had she sealed the letter, however, when anxiety sprang up afresh. The journal reported the arrest and interrogation of Philippe Egalité, the Prince d'Orléans. He was accused of attending secret, anti-revolutionary conferences held at night in the house of the "woman Buzot," together with Dumouriez, Roland and his wife, Vergniaud, Brissot, Gensonné, Gorasas, Louvet, Pétion, and Guadet.

"What profound rascality!" Madame Roland blazed out to Champagneux. "What excess of impudence! All the names cited here are the very ones signed to Buzot's petition for the banishment of all the Bourbons." Such lies made her wonder suddenly if her imprisonment did not mean something more than retaliation for her husband's escape. Perhaps Danton meant to take her life! She wrote a protest to this accusation and once again the brave Dulaure published it in his *Thermomètre du Jour*.

On the twenty-fourth of June realization of the Commune's deadly enmity grew more certain. Suddenly under her very window a raucous voice was lifted crying the wares of *Le Père Duchesne*. She caught the words: "The visit of Père Duchesne to the infamous Madame Coco in her prison." What refinement of cruelty! She had a copy brought her and trembling with fury and apprehension she read the grotesque horror. It seemed that Père Duchesne paid a visit to the cell of that toothless old woman, Madame Coco, and she, taking Duchesne for a brigand from the revolting Vendée welcomed him with open arms and boasted of Roland's warm relations with the rebels and the British. Duchesne then advised her to weep for the sins which she was about to expiate on the scaffold.

Still shaking from the shock of this ghastly prophecy, Madame Roland was summoned by the jailer's wife to meet members of the administration come to question her.

In the apartment to which she was conducted Marie saw one man walking up and down, another writing at a table. "Is it I whom you wish to see, gentlemen?" she asked, and her heart beat furiously in anticipation of she knew not what.

"You are the citizen Roland?"

"That is my name."

For long moments the promenade and the writing continued. Suddenly one of the men said, "I am going to set you free."

Unreasonably, the words which should have been so thrilling left her cold. "But the seals are still

fixed upon my apartment and my effects," she said dully.

"The administration will have them taken away during the day. I am writing now for an order." The man at the table rose and handed her her discharge. Then he said harshly, "You know where Monsieur Roland is at present?" But she only smiled at the question.

She couldn't realize it. Free? It couldn't be true! Not till Fleury came to put her things together and embrace her with joyous sobs and cries did that paper in her hand acquire the faintest reality. When all was ready she paused a moment on the threshold of "Flora's Bower" and looked back. Who would follow her here? In a dream she received blessings and felicitations from her fellow prisoners and from the jailer and his wife.

It was only when she and the maid were in the carriage rattling over the cobblestones, that her numbed soul was pricked by a thousand stabs of hope. Perhaps it was true, after all. Freedom again! Ah, there were so many things she'd like to do. She might help Brissot, help her friends. Her face grew radiant. Soon she would have Eudora in her arms. As the carriage stopped she leaped from it with her birdlike swoop, ran into the court and said to the beaming *concierge*, "Bonjour, Lamare!" Lightly she fled up the steps.

"Citizen Roland!"

Her heart stopped dead. She turned. There upon her very heels as if they had sprung up from the pavement of the court were two men in uni-

form. One of them waved a paper at her. "What do you want?" she gasped.

"On the part of the law we arrest you!"

She glanced at the paper. Suddenly she knew what to do. She ran down the steps and across the court.

"Halt! Where are you going?"

"To my proprietor's where I have business. Follow me!"

The joyous face of Madame Cauchois appeared the moment she knocked. But Marie's desperate aspect hushed her greeting. "Let me sit here and breathe a moment, but do not rejoice," panted Marie and sank into a chair. "I have just been released from the Abbaye in order to be taken to the prison of Sainte-Pélagie. A trap! A cruel trap!" But already she had decided to protest it through the commissioners who represented her section in the central government of Paris. She asked beseechingly, "Can you send word to the *commissaires?*"

Madame Cauchois's son was there to listen and respond to such loveliness in such distress. "I'll go gladly!" Off he went on the generous service which was to cost him his life. For this he was set down a traitor, arrested later, imprisoned, finally guillotined.

Two *commissaires* of the section returned with Cauchois shortly. They were ready to do what they could. "Come with us to the Hôtel de Ville and we will defend you!" they said. Madame Roland could not well refuse.

At the Commune's stronghold she was obliged

to wait under guard in the antechamber while the *commissaires* went into the inner office. An hour passed. Finally a police officer came out, saying briefly, "Follow me!" She struck her hands together. She had lost! Rushing to the door, she flung it open and shouted: "Commissaires of the section, they are taking me away!"

Gestures of despair were her answer. "We cannot prevent it. We will not forget you. We shall see that your examination is forthcoming."

Strange loyalty to legal forms possessed these ruthless dictators. In the carriage the officer beside Marie said with the reasonable air of one who explains all to satisfaction, "You see your first arrest was illegal. So we had to set you at liberty in order to arrest you properly."

Her head dropped upon her hand. To taste freedom for one moment and then to have the cup dashed from her lips! Ah, now it was bitter earnest. This morning Père Duchesne, this afternoon her re-arrest! Not as a substitute for Roland, but for herself was she wanted by her enemies. Before her stretched the grim vista of prison days and at its end rose a fearful shape, the outline of the guillotine. Shuddering, she turned her eyes from it out the window to a Paris she might never see but once again.

Sainte-Pélagie, situated near the Jardin des Plantes, had recently turned from convent into prison. Criminals of the lowest sort were put there. But, like the Abbaye, it was choked now with political prisoners and had been the scene of bloody mas-

sacres in September last. This prison is no more, but its records still exist. One may find the page where Madame Roland's name was entered together with this glowing description of her charms: "Height, 5 feet; Hair and eyelashes, dark chestnut; Eyes, brown; Nose, medium; Mouth, ordinary; Face, oval; Chin, round; Forehead, high."

Because she insisted upon being alone, she had to have a bed moved into a tiny cell, equipped at her expense with wash-basin and pitcher. The jailer's wife, Madame Bouchaud, regarding her with gentle eyes, said sadly: "You know, madame, here nothing is provided for the prisoners."

"No? But how then do they live?"

"They get some beans and a pound and a half of bread a day." When Madame Roland, smiling wryly, said she intended to subsist on that, Madame Bouchaud answered, "Yes, madame, as you wish. But if you cannot stand it—and I doubt your powers—I shall be only too happy to provide you meals from my own kitchen."

And, indeed, after a day or two of trial, Marie accepted the offer. The ups and downs of that dreadful twenty-fourth of June had left her sapped. She mustn't be ill. She must keep flowing that stream of hope and love to Roland, Buzot, and her child. It was simple fare and not expensive. But even of that degree of self-indulgence her enemies made capital. At one of the section meetings she was described as corrupting the *concierge* and feasting with the family. "We should hurry such a woman out of the world without trial!" screamed

the accuser. And Marie, shuddering, said within herself, "Oh, Danton, it is thus you sharpen knives against your victims!"

To select her for condemnation of all the women at Sainte-Pélagie! Dreadful creatures of the street were kept there—murderers, degenerates, thieves. Moreover, there was a group which really did feast and kept their fellow prisoners awake all night with their merriment. These were actresses from the Théâtre Egalité arrested because they had played in a piece against the Jacobins. Nor did they toast their luck in vain. For one of the revolutionary committee had been a former actor and later he destroyed the accusation against his fellow players and saved their lives.

What a place—Sainte-Pélagie! The only corridor where the women prisoners could take the air was overlooked by the men's wing. The horrors shouted down and flung back up again drove Madame Roland in hasty return to the stuffy sanctum of her cell. For many days she was in a state of nervous exhaustion and could neither eat nor sleep. Then one morning she woke at dawn from a brief forgetfulness and resolved to take herself in hand. "Enough of this!" she said sternly. "What are you doing but permitting your enemies to torture and debase you! Haven't you your books? Is your time not your own? Then use it to good advantage, Marie Philipon, and regain that independence impervious to circumstance!"

Gathering up her resolution, she made herself go down into the court and talk with her companions.

One of them, the Duchesse de Grammont, lived to write this tribute to Madame Roland: "Her apartment became the asylum of peace in the bosom of this hell. If she descended to the court her simple presence restored good order ,and the abandoned women there on whom no other power exerted an influence were restrained by the fear of displeasing her."

Again she offered a serene face of welcome to the friends who faithfully followed her to this new place of confinement—Champagneux, Bosc, and inspector Grandpré. They told her all the news and brought her letters from Roland who had now reached Rouen. Strange messages, divided still between love and bitterness! But from Caen, where Buzot and Barbaroux were now at work against the Commune, talking and writing against violence and anarchy, came letters to Marie from her lover which recreated all the beauty of existence.

Her pen raced to answer them. But it also now continued to fill page after page of the *Notices Historiques* and she only wished she could be sure of time enough to write a careful history of the tremendous era in which she had lived. Once more she conned her English lessons, repeated Thompson's poems, and read her Tacitus with what she described as a kind of passionate excitement.

It is by this detached, intellectual vitality rather than for any other attribute that Madame Roland stands forth as a rare example of womankind. Other women have been brave and capable of heroic sacrifice. But all too few have preserved as she did

that self indestructible—not only untouched by circumstance, but free from the fierce claims of personal emotion. Hers was a fervent heart consecrated to one great, romantic love. Yet before that love she was never prostrate. At a time when all standards of conduct had been swept away, she could still submit the dictates of her heart to higher dictates of the soul. And when all else in life had gone she could resist the supreme temptation to submerge herself completely in her feeling for Buzot. So great was her integrity, moral and mental, that with her, love became not a devouring flame which destroyed, but a steady light which blessed.

A few of her letters to Buzot written in prison came to light years and years later and they reveal the beauty of a feeling all the more fervid for being free. One dated July fourth, 1793, includes this touching paragraph:

I had brought to me four days ago "this dear picture," which by a sort of superstition I did not wish to put into a prison. But why refuse this sweet image, frail and precious substitute for the presence of its subject? It lies upon my heart, hidden from all eyes, felt at every moment and often bathed with tears.

Three days later she wrote another letter to Buzot which vividly presents the peace she had achieved in that grim Sainte-Pélagie where she was so blissfully alone.

You cannot represent to yourself, my friend, the charm of a prison where one needs to account only to one's own heart for the spending of every moment. No disturbing distraction, no painful sacrifice, no pressing care, none of

those former duties—more severe than respectable for an honest heart, no contradictions between social laws and the sweetest inspiration of nature, no jealous look spying out the expression of what one feels or the occupation one chooses, no one to suffer because of one's melancholy or inaction, no one expecting efforts, exacting sentiments which may not be in one's power to give.

I find it delicious to combine means of being useful to Roland with greater freedom for you. I should love to sacrifice my life to him to acquire the right to give my last breath to you alone.

I thank heaven to have known you, to have let me savour the inexpressible good of loving and being cherished with that generosity, that delicacy which vulgar souls would never recognize and which is above all their satisfactions.

Madame Roland's gift for making friends stood her in good stead these days. Her jailer, Madame Bouchaud, concerned about the sickening heat from the sun which beat upon the walls of a captive who had become so dear, had her transferred to a room above the keeper's own apartment. There with jasmine boughs which Bosc brought in, her books —even a forte-piano which tinkled sweetly beneath her loving fingers—she could quite forget she was in prison.

Were it only not for the news from without! Brissot was in the very cell she had quitted at the Abbaye. Rage against him and pursuit of the refugee Girondists were being lashed to fury by rebellion which from time to time broke out against the Commune. Lyons was still a center of it. When the Commune passed an edict drafting a hundred thousand soldiers the unruly Vendée became a storm

center of revolt. And now something was about to happen which sent the sleuths of Robespierre chasing down to Caen on the scent of trouble.

On the thirteenth of July Madame Bouchaud came rushing to Marie with starting eyes. "*Mon Dieu*, madame! The most amazing news! The most incredible! Marat is assassinated! Yes, madame, in his bath where he was working on his journal and—just imagine—by a woman! By a girl of twenty-one! She came here from Caen for the purpose. She slipped into Marat's room on some pretext and stabbed him where he sat!"

Pale with amazement, Madame Roland gasped, "Who is she? What her motive?"

"Nobody knows, a young woman of mystery, traveling alone! She remains unmoved as a statue, made no resistance to her arrest. Paris is paralyzed. Nobody can believe it. All she said was that the world must lose its deadliest tyrant. Her name is Charlotte Corday."

A whirl of emotion spun Madame Roland's heart around. She was glad and pitying, despairing and afraid. This girl came from Caen. Then Caen would be combed for Commune enemies. Marat was slain, but Danton still lived. The fear grew greater with the word brought by Champagneux that the young assassin had upon her person a letter from Barbaroux introducing her to his friend de Perret. That letter might ultimately involve them all. Strange mischance! For Barbaroux hardly knew the girl and had no knowledge of her purpose. But fate was strange. Charlotte Corday had

been taken to the very cell where first Madame Roland, then Brissot, had been locked.

Champagneux said long afterwards he could never forget the splendid rage of Madame Roland on the day of Marat's funeral. In that astounding cortège when crowds chanted hymns to "the People's Friend" as if he were a saint and flowers strewed the passage of the coffin, were numbered almost all the deputies at the Convention. Even the ones he had threatened and insulted paid him honor. Lanthenas, who had shown no little courage recently in standing up to the man who had called him "weak of heart," must have grown frightened after this. For he wrote a most equivocal comment on Marat's death.

In profound despair Madame Roland cried, "Now, indeed, I abandon all hope that patriots will ever rise against the Mountain!"

Far likelier was it that the Mountain would fall upon its victims. She herself expected to be dragged before the Revolutionary Committee at almost any time. She warned her friends for fear the unexpected shock would prove too harsh. Sophie Grandchamps was one. She came to the prison as often as she dared and womanlike never failed to gaze about the musty walls with eyes which held the vision of Madame Roland's day of triumph in the *salon* of Calonne.

One July day, however, the distinguished prisoner received a visit which astounded her beyond measure. Come to keep the promise she had made the last time they met in Paris, the visitor was no

other than Henriette Cannet Vouglans. What a greeting these childhood friends exchanged!

"But how did you know I was here?" asked Marie, pressing her close.

"Through Roland. After you were re-arrested he wrote me in despair to ask if there wasn't something I could do. And, oh, my dear, there is! I've come to do it and you must consent. Here am I a childless widow—a nobody! And here are you, a mother, a wife, a beloved, important person! You must agree I matter less than you."

Marie drew off and gazed at that lovable, loyal face of generosity. "Of what are you thinking?" she asked in consternation.

Madame Vouglans said it was so simple. All Marie had to do was to exchange clothes with her and walk out a free woman. Henriette, who had done so little in her useless life, begged to be allowed to do this for her friend. In gratitude for a sacrifice so heroic, so sincere, Madame Roland embraced her friend anew with tears. "But they would kill you, dear friend of mine, they would kill you!" she kept murmuring. "What would it matter if they did?" replied Henriette. But she urged in vain. At last they parted, each one to marvel at the magnificent and generous courage of the other.

It was with a heavy heart that Madame Roland followed the news these days. France was menaced on all sides. The enemy had taken Valenciennes and Mayence. Lyons and the Vendée were still rebellious centers of royal influence. A plot was on foot, so it was said, to spirit Marie-Antoinette

from the Temple prison. Although the revolutionary armies, now commanded by generals of genius who had sprung up to save their country, were fighting with the most extraordinary bravery and success, the Convention and the Commune were beset at every hand. Everyone not loyal to them was suspected, and the Reign of Terror had begun.

Madame Roland realized that the time of any living member of the Gironde was now short. Austerely she tried to rouse her friends for a last effort. She had written to Buzot to exorcise the light-hearted spirit of the lovable Barbaroux and the lazy mind of Pétion. Now it devolved upon her to stir Brissot from his dream of future reprieve.

"Brissot is doomed!" she said to Bosc and Champagneux. "Some one ought to tell him so. In the time left him he should compose something for posterity. He should set down his experience to instruct men in sane principles of revolution." No one had the courage to acquaint Brissot of his certain fate. But she who was to share it had the courage. In admiration and true friendship she wrote the superb challenge to the leader. He responded. At once he set to work upon his memoirs.

And she on hers. The *Notices Historiques* were finished. Now, urged on by Bosc and Sophie Grandchamps she had begun to write her life. On the ninth of August she penned the first words of the Memoirs which were to become among the most famous in France. At the National Library of Paris one can see the manuscript, almost unblemished by erasures and changes, the writing vigorous

and clear. There it lies under the glass case, an eternal tribute to the undaunted spirit of its author. To write in less than two months a book of more than fifty thousand words is an achievement in itself. To write it in the confusion of that hour, with a heart torn by the sorrows of her country and her friends, with death her only certainty—here is a triumph of unparalleled courage.

These pages she was to divide between Madame Grandchamps and Bosc for safe-keeping. And hardly had she begun to fill them when a dual blow fell upon her head. Champagneux was arrested. A noose, which first caught the prison inspector Grandpré, and then let him go, involved all the men left in the departments by the Girondists. Garat was accused and with him his assistant, Champagneux. The minister of the Interior managed to plead and promise himself into safety once more. But Champagneux was held fast. "One more!" cried Madame Roland, heartsick at the news.

"Poor Champagneux!" said Bosc. "He minds imprisonment less than missing a sight of you." And then he had to break to her a second piece of bitter news. The *Notices Historiques*, hidden by Champagneux in his cellar, had been burned by a member of the household fearful of the men who came to search for incriminating evidence. Gone, the work into which she had put her very heart and which she hoped would live after she had been destroyed! Well, there was no pain which fate withheld!

None the less, urged on by everyone, she con-

tinued with the Memoirs. Forgetful of prison, she lived once more the calm days of girlhood, dreamed away there on the Pont-Neuf where the silver willows swayed. How little had those innocent eyes foreseen the searching trials which were to come! It was hard not to be disillusioned. Here was a blow from another quarter. Roland, bitter in exile as he was before they parted, was setting down on paper his enmity against the man who had robbed him of "his half." Marie, hearing this, was near to swooning. Wasn't it enough that all who handed on Buzot's letters and her own had to know their secret which no one would understand? To trail before the world what was sacred and undefiled and forsworn forever—ah, it was unworthy of that integrity she had always loved in Roland! She wrote that as her last request she begged him to destroy the work of vengeance. And in the end he did.

Such a stab from her husband was all the harder to bear because Buzot's letters, which made all beauty so close and real, had long been interrupted. Turmoil had broken the hand to hand chain which had delivered them. She knew that toward the end of July he had left Caen for Bretagne on the coast and her prayer to him was that he might embark for the United States. She wrote him of her hope on the thirty-first of August and told him he was "the man most loved by the most loving woman." It was her last letter to him.

September dragged on wearily. Success attended the revolutionary armies both on the border and in the provinces where civil war was raging, and the

Mountain's pride grew more omnipotent week by week. The Convention passed a law which made suspects of all not actively at work with them, slated the trial of the Girondins and began that of Marie-Antoinette.

Madame Roland begged her friends not to risk their lives to see her. But Sister Agathe, the faithful old nun friend, slipped in all the same. So, too, did Bosc. He had now resigned his post and lived in Bancal's little house at Montmorency. Dressed as a country lout, he came in to Paris three times a week to mind his only occupation, which was to serve his friends. Weaving his strong web of sympathy, he went from Madame Roland to Brissot and from him to Champagneux. He saw their families, carried letters, executed errands, and dried their tears.

Another mutual friend Madame Roland shared with Brissot now came forward with eager offers of assistance. It was Edmond Mentelle, the geographer. Over and over he risked his head for both of them, and for Marie visited her daughter and her friends and received her manuscript.

But if she accepted much from others she also gave much. No matter what her own griefs, she always preserved a margin for the griefs of others. When Madame Pétion's mother was judged a traitor and sentenced to death Madame Roland spent hours with her in tender consolation. And this at the very moment of her wildest anxiety about Buzot! Her one hope for him had been destroyed. He had sailed, not for America as she had prayed, but for

Bordeaux in a last attempt to stem the tide of terrorism sweeping France. That meant certain doom. Oh, this was the end of everything! Why keep up the struggle longer? Why? Who would profit if she remained alive only for the gallows? No one but Danton and Robespierre. No one but those poor, deluded wretches who ran howling after the tumbrils.

Night after night she tossed in a wrestle with this last temptation. It would be so sweet to pass out quietly. Of death she had no fear. It was death in that ghastly form. To be a public spectacle and have one's last earthly moments split by the harpy cries of human vultures! Ah, no. Surely she need not drink this bitter cup. Surely she had the right to cheat the gallows and die by her own hand! At last her resolve was made.

It was October eighth. She sat down and penned her farewell letters, meaning to end it all. To Eudora she wrote: "*Remember your mother!* These few words best enclose all the things I can tell you," and counseled her that "an austere and busy life" was best. To Fleury, "My dear nurse, you whose faithfulness, service and attachment have been dear to me for thirteen years, receive my embraces and adieu." She wrote to Edmond Mentelle, to Roland, and to several others. To Bosc she meant to say good-bye in person. She added a passage to her Memoirs which was meant as a farewell to Buzot and then she made her will. Eudora was to receive the marriage portion Roland had settled upon his wife. Another sum was to buy the harp Eudora's

mother had already rented for her and the child was to have Marie's piano bought out of her own savings. A sum was to be left to Monsieur and Madame Bernard who were to see Eudora as long as they should live. To her dear friend Bosc she left a ring. Madame Roland wrote down her last thoughts. She wrote the long night through, never expecting to live till the end of the next day.

If Louis Bosc had been less faithful to the tryst she might have poured that little phial she cherished down her throat. But he did come. He heard her plan. "You?" he cried in desperation. "You, who tolerate in others no weakness, nothing but their best, you would do this? Ah, no, dear friend, such an act is not for you. A grander destiny is yours—that of giving to others a heroic example of innocence and courage!"

Through her weary brain the words traced a pattern of authority. They gave to her sinking heart its needed stimulant. In vain, she longed to argue her fatigue, her hopelessness, her horror of a public death. She couldn't make the protest. Bosc was right. With a gesture of abnegation touching in its simplicity she held it out to him—the little phial wherein lay her escape. "I must say over the child's prayer I've recently set down in these memoirs of mine," said she with the ghost of a smile. "Oh, Thou, who placed me on earth, make me to fulfil my destiny in the manner which conforms best to Thy Holy Will and to the good of my brothers."

From that time forth Madame Roland was done

with any show of weakness. She read her Tacitus, wrote madly on her book, rose up with eagerness to participate in the Girondist trial. Named in the accusation of Brissot, she was summoned to the Palais de Justice as a witness at the hearing. This building, once part of the palace of Saint Louis and at this time the court of the Revolutionary Tribunal, was connected by stairs and passageways with the Conciergerie, the prison which held all those awaiting final trial. The two structures stood on the island of the Cité only a little distance from the Pont-Neuf where Marie had grown up. Now as she passed in the carriage she leaned across the guard to gaze at the mediaeval turrets of the prison where her friends of the Gironde were now confined. To be there was the beginning of the end. The queen had long been there. Scarcely anyone passed through its portals for the last time except by way of the fatal tumbril.

Madame Roland was now conducted, not to the Conciergerie, but by the front entrance directly to the hall of justice. The great corridors were crowded with witnesses, visitors, officials and deputies. Terror was enthroned there in the room of the tribunal where on trial for their lives were gathered the twenty-one men who represented so much of the talent, idealism and honesty which once belonged to the revolutionary movement. Madame Roland had worked and fought beside them. They had shared her triumph and her downfall. Only because she herself had passed through the bit-

terness of death and taken leave of life forever could she sustain that fearful day.

But she did sustain it. Not one moment of its drama was lost upon her. She saw her friend Edmond Mentelle in the corridor and received from him a smuggled note. One of Champagneux's prison companions, brought in as witness, likewise slipped into her hand a missive from that faithful friend. She answered it before the day was over, saying with a flash of her old gay defiance, "With a pen which perhaps will soon sign the order to cut my throat I am writing beside, almost under the eyes of, the hangmen and have some pride in braving them." Then, as Champagneux had requested, she cut off a tress of her chestnut hair and folded it within the missive. How she hoped this good man would escape the toils. If he did, she knew he would help Bosc protect Eudora. All day she waited, a figure marked by many eyes. But she was not called into the Tribunal and so never again laid eyes upon Brissot. It was a bitter disappointment. As she told Bosc she had longed to testify and had intended to "thunder without reserve."

This was on October twenty-fourth and two days later Marie-Antoinette went to her death. Magnificently scornful of the jeering mob, she died more superbly than she had ever lived. Her trial had been terrible, but less so than the necessity of leaving her two children, not with friends, but in the Temple under hostile guard. It may seem strange that for her that other mother's heart could spare no twinge of pity. Madame Roland had not wished

the queen's death. But at a moment when so many splendid men and women were falling every day and patriots, like Brissot, were doomed to die, it seemed a smaller incident that France should lose a sovereign who had never by word or deed done one thing to help the country. Madame Roland, utterly devoid of sentimentality, thought of Marie-Antoinette only as a source of power never used for good.

Besides, it was just at this very time when Marie learned a thing which swept all other thoughts aside. Eudora had lost her protector. She had been obliged to leave Monsieur and Madame Creuzé-Latouche. The child of Commune enemies had been observed, marked, and was no longer safe. Wild with anxiety, the mother wrote to Bosc demanding news. He wrote back—he could no longer come to see her without certain arrest—that he had installed the little girl at the house of a certain Madame Godefroid. That good woman had other children with her, kept a kind of *pension* and there Eudora, under another name, would be quite unnoticed. She, trained in the revolutionary school, brave, intelligent, and true, knew how to play this game. Madame Roland breathed more freely. What would she do without Louis Bosc!

But what would anybody do without him? Marie knew that he spent the night of October thirty-first sharing the awful grief of Madame Brissot whose husband was to die next day. And Madame Roland also kept the vigil from her lonely cot. She followed in imagination those men who once had

governed France as they sat from dark until their last dawn talking of the Republic and of Man's immortal spirit. Later when she learned the details she almost felt that she had been there to hear Vergniaud with his matchless eloquence reply to his companions. When they claimed that freedom would perish with the party of the Gironde Vergniaud said: "No. Our blood is warm enough to fertilize the soil of the Republic. Let us not carry away with us the future. Let us bequeath to the people Hope in exchange for the death we receive at their hands."

Next day the "twenty-one" came out from prison singing the *Marseillaise*. All the way to the scaffold they sang the hymn in triumphant chorus. And before the sound of it had ceased a carriage had traversed the distance between Sainte-Pélagie and the prison they had left, the Conciergerie. Madame Roland had made the first stage of the journey in the footsteps of her friends.

Today one cannot see the exact room in the grim old prison where this distinguished victim was confined. With the reconstruction of the Palais de Justice in the next century too many changes were made in the edifice. But it certainly was within the cloister of the women's court and likely stood just opposite the only cell which has been preserved. This is the one where the unhappy queen, sent to her death October twenty-sixth, spent her last agony. Still in its place is the altar where she knelt, fixed by the spying glance of the guard. Like it was the place assigned to Madame Roland. She found it

filthy and dark. Not until a fellow prisoner lent her a cot had she a place to lay her head. Yet even here she managed to secure a table, pens, and ink. For she meant to add what she could to the manuscript divided between a chest in Edmond Mentelle's house and a dark hole in the rafters of Bosc's cottage in the forest.

On November first, the day she entered the Conciergerie, Madame Roland had her first interrogation before the Revolutionary Tribunal. It was just a week since she stood outside that door at Brissot's trial. In this room of doom, full of men who drank, talked, took notes, where visitors and messengers came and went continually, an interrogation had all the secrecy of a public circus.

This was Marie's first glimpse of the famous and terrible Fouquier-Tinville, the public accuser who worked so indefatigably to feed the greedy guillotine. He worked hard now and the judge had every air of longing to pass sentence right away. These men wished the accused to answer everything by "yes" or "no" and fumed at any explanation. Roland's life, her associates, her knowledge of agitations in the Vendée, her relationships with the men recently executed and those other men in hiding—such were the subjects of relentless inquiry. Three hours of it, before she was let go!

There followed two days of feverish activity on Madame Roland's part. She wrote letters, reported that first trial, prepared for her defense. In the afternoon she would appear in that huge and handsome hall of thirteenth century construction,

once the Salles des Gardes and now because of the many victims passing through it called "the street of Paris." Some of the men she met there have told in subsequent recollections the impression she made upon them. Here is one telling picture:

> Something more than is generally found in the eyes of women beamed from hers which were large, black and full of softness and expression. She often spoke to me at the grille with the freedom and energy of a great man. This Republican language from the mouth of a pretty French woman for whom the scaffold was preparing was one of the miracles of the Revolution to which we were not accustomed. She could speak of the Girondists without feminine pity. The woman who waited upon her said to me one day, "Before you she calls up all her courage, but in her own room she sometimes stands for three hours, leaning by her window and weeping, weeping——"

Yes, she was human and frail and lonely. No one could approach her now. Dead or in hiding were all the beings in the world she loved. Her tears had fallen like rain after the second interrogation on November fourth. It had been terrible.

This time she was accused of writing Roland's letters and of conducting the *Sentinel* against the Mountain. Fouquier-Tinville brought out letters captured from de Perret, charged her with friendship for Barbaroux, and finally demanded knowledge of Roland's whereabouts. When she refused to reply she was reproved for failing to keep her sworn oath to tell the truth.

At this she flung up her head and cried in a ringing tone: "The accused is accountable for her own acts, not for another's. If during four months the

Convention had not refused the hearing that Roland demanded it would not be necessary for him to be away and for me to conceal his residence—supposing that I know it. I recognize no law in the name of which one can force the betrayal of the dearest sentiments of nature!"

Violently the public accuser slapped the table, "With such a chatterbox we'll never finish!" he bawled. "I declare the interrogation closed."

Asked by the judge whom she would choose to defend her she indicated the brave and skillful advocate who had defended Marie-Antoinette and Charlotte Corday and Madame Pétion's pathetic mother. His name was Chauveau-Lagarde. At the door of the Tribunal, Madame Roland turned and said, "For the harm you wish me I wish you a peace equal to mine at whatever price!"

Out the narrow door then and down the winding stair she passed and swiftly through "the street of Paris,"—quickly lest the proud smile for those who greeted her would break before she was alone.

For the last interrogation before the final sentence was passed witnesses were called. They were Madame Roland's servants, Marguerite Fleury and Louis Lecoq, and the governess, Mademoiselle Mignot. As she took her seat Madame Roland gave them all a look in which gratitude and pity were mingled. How fervently she prayed that these good people would not be made to suffer through her. The depositions of Fleury and Lecoq were brief, but what they had to say went to prove their mistress guiltless of anything in word or deed which

might be construed as treacherous. Not so Mademoiselle Mignot. Madame Roland gasped and turned pale as she listened. Explicit statements fell one by one from those false lips which once had pledged eternal loyalty. Her employer was a seditious character who had urged on civil war against the Commune. Could it be? Was this the woman to whom she would have entrusted the innocent Eudora? Fleury had covered her face with her hands. And Fouquier-Tinville glared his triumph. Here was the last finishing touch to the evidence he had gathered. Promptly he closed the hearing.

A guard on either side of her urged Madame Roland towards the door which led to the Conciergerie. All she could do was to send over her shoulder one farewell look to the faithful twain who had risked their lives for her sake. As for that other—Marie walked slowly down the narrow, winding stair thinking of her. "Ah, well, she is not young and doubtless was terribly afraid. Nothing could have saved me now—no matter what she said!"

Hardly had the door of her cell closed upon her when it opened again. Before her stood the jailer's wife. She seemed in great agitation, came close to Marie, and after an instant whispered, "Madame, I have a plan to get you out of here. You are too young and fair to die this shameful death. You are innocent. I've watched them all and there are none with just the air you have. Trust me! Do as I say and the thing can be managed. You can escape!"

It was as if she had been sent on purpose to efface

the treachery which had just been done. Madame Roland was profoundly moved. Here was a woman who did not even know her and yet would risk her head to save her! What beautiful humanity! The poor creature would hardly accept refusal, broke down into sobs, and had to be tenderly comforted. "Your sacrifice, your thought of me has brightened a dark day!" said Marie, taking the rough hand in her own.

And now at last came the evening of the seventh of November. It was, as well she knew, her last night on earth. In a few moments her counselor, Monsieur Chauveau-Lagarde, would arrive. Well, she was ready for him. She had done everything. Those letters of farewell Bosc held and would deliver. Her good, brave friend Edmond Mentelle had received all her manuscript but the last page which she would leave for him next day. He also had "that dear picture" and all her last messages to friends. She herself had written to Madame Godefroid, Eudora's present guardian, to send her "thanks, vows, gratitude" and to leave with her the hope that the child would "preserve her innocence and fill one day in peace and obscurity the touching duty of wife and mother."

"Citizen Roland!" A key turned in the lock. The jailer was admitting her expected visitor.

Without preliminary Monsieur Chauveau-Lagarde plunged into his plan for tomorrow's defense before the Criminal Tribunal. He was ardent, logical and keen, and rehearsed his arguments with an intensity of feeling which betrayed the sympathy he

did not express in words. His client listened calmly. Now and then she interjected a comment or question. It grew very late. Suddenly a rap sounded on the door and a guard said through the grille that they had but five minutes more.

The advocate rose from his chair, and Madame Roland stood up also. Their eyes met in a searching gaze which revealed to each an utter despair of the outcome. Not trusting herself to speak, Madame Roland drew from her finger a ring of quaint design and with a hand that trembled slightly held it out to her companion.

Chauveau-Lagarde, at the utter finality of the gesture, turned white. "Madame," he cried, drawing back, "we shall see each other again tomorrow after the judgment."

But she shook her head. "Tomorrow," she answered in a low voice, "I shall exist no longer. I know the fate that awaits me. Your counsels are dear to me. To you they would become fatal. It would cost you your life to try to save mine. Let me not have the pain of causing the death of a good man. Do not come to the Tribunal! I should deny you as my advocate. But accept this single gage which my gratitude can offer you. Tomorrow I shall exist no more!" And again she held out the ring.

The jailer's key grated in the lock. "Monsieur, it is the hour!"

Chauveau-Lagarde took the ring. He looked speechlessly into those grave, dark eyes and then

with a gesture of utter despair he flung himself from the room.

For a long time Madame Roland sat sunk in thought. Then as her candle guttered, she trimmed it, picked up her pen and wrote the words which close the Memoirs which became so famous. "Truth, Country, Friendship, sacred objects, sentiments dear to my heart, receive my last sacrifice. My life was consecrated to you. You will make my death equally sweet and glorious."

Folding the page, she took up once more her quill and wrote the last defense which next day she was to deliver before the Revolutionary Tribunal. A mere concession to legal form, this, for the sentence was inevitable. As she finished, a cock in the stillness crowed long and loud. She walked to the window and waited for it to crow again. How often as a little girl in the house a mere stone's throw away had she welcomed that sound because of her impatience to greet the rising sun. Now she shuddered at it. For it was the herald of the day when she was to die on the scaffold.

By only one sign that next morning did Madame Roland indicate her conviction that this was to be her last day on earth. She had eaten the roll and drunk the water which served her for breakfast. She had greeted her jailer with accustomed cheerfulness. Then she made her toilette. And it was in its perfection that she betrayed her sense of impending fate. She put on a frock of white English mousseline, patterned in bouquets of roses and fastened by a girdle of black velvet ribbon. She dressed

her hair carefully and let it fall in its luxurious thickness over her shoulders. Then she donned a bonnet of blue. When the jailer came to admit her to the corridor she stepped out looking more regal than she had ever permitted herself to look in the beautiful palace of the ministry.

Across the threshold she was met by one of her fellow prisoners, Comte Beugnot. With a glance of admiration, he asked, "Madame, may I address you a word?"

"But, yes," she replied. "Only let us walk along the passage."

His message was from Etienne Clavière, the former minister of Finance and colleague of her husband. Madame Roland listened and replied briefly. In another moment they had reached the "street of Paris." Here a great number of prisoners were waiting to be called before the Tribunal. For it was through the grille of the huge door at one end of the hall that were called the names of those who were next to be judged. As Madame Roland and her companion approached there now occurred a scene of such moving drama that the Comte Beugnot who lived until days of peace and wrote his recollections devoted to it the full power of his eloquence.

Madame Roland's face appeared more than usually animated and her color was ravishing. Upon her lips was a smile. With one hand she held up the train of her frock, the other she had abandoned to a crowd of women who pressed about her to kiss it. Those best instructed as to the fate awaiting her sobbed as they gathered around

her, commending her soul to Providence. Nothing could portray the scene. One must have been on the spot. Madame Roland replied to everyone with an affectionate goodness. She did not promise them her return. Neither did she say she was going to her death. But the last words which she addressed them were touching recommendations. She urged upon them peace, courage, hope and the exercise of virtues which are the only help in misfortune.

An old jailor, named Fontenay, whose heart had for thirty years resisted the exercise of his cruel trade, came to open the grille with the tears running down his cheeks. Madame Roland had commenced a phrase to me when two guards from within called her name for the Tribunal. At this cry, terrible for all of us as well as for her, she stopped and said to me, gripping my hand, "Adieu, monsieur. Let us make peace. It is time." Raising her eyes to mine she perceived that I was holding back my tears and that I was tremendously moved. She was touched by it, but added only the word, "Courage!"

After the door had clanged behind her there was no friend to set down what happened at the top of that dread staircase. She was allowed to deliver her statement of the defense. Chauveau-Lagarde was not there to undertake the dangerous honor of a last appeal. Then the judgment was delivered. Marie-Jeanne Philipon, wife of Jean-Marie Roland, was found guilty of being an accomplice in a horrible conspiracy against the Republic and was condemned according to the law of December 16, 1792, to the punishment of death. From this sentence there was no appeal.

Once more in her cell she was obliged to receive a priest who gave her "extreme unction," the last

sacrament of the Church. Then with her own hand she cut from her head the bright thick locks of hair. Now she was ready for that last terrible hour she had so much dreaded and once determined to escape.

As the ancient bell of Notre-Dame rang out four o'clock on this eighth day of November, 1793, the gate leading from the Conciergerie into the Court of Honor before the Palais de Justice swung slowly open and Madame Roland passed through. The sight which met her eyes was of a kind to strike terror to the heart of anyone not made of stone. One tumbril full of victims was already moving through the outer gate toward the Pont-au-Change. Another stood waiting and in it cringed and trembled the figure of a middle-aged man. At the horses' heads stood guards. Guards stood about the cart and all along the court. But it was not their gleaming bayonets and swords which constituted the menace of the scene. It was the mob.

They filled the court. They crowded the stairways of the palace, hung over the parapets, and pressed about the outer gate. And how they screamed and shook their fists and pushed the soldiers as if they would have at their victims to tear them limb from limb. As that small, erect figure clothed in white appeared across the prison threshold every wild eye turned upon her. "Down with traitors! Death to the woman Roland! To the guillotine with her!"

As if unconscious of the raucous cries which filled the air, Madame Roland deliberately approached

the cart. She placed her foot upon its iron shaft and lightly mounted to her place. Then she suffered the guard to bind her hands behind her back. Imprecations and insults sprayed down upon her from the crowded parapets. And through the deadly turmoil the tumbril creaked slowly out upon the street and began its interminable journey to the Place de la Révolution.

Mobs lined the bridge. Madame Roland could see them gathered along the right bank of the river. Above the creaking of the wheels their demoniac yells assailed her ears without an instant's interval. "To the guillotine! Curses on the traitor!" And yet, who knows, perhaps some sense of other messages comforted her heart. For she did not pass that way alone. Mingled with the riffraff that day were men and women whose grief and tenderness were flung over her like a cloak against the storm of hate. And close behind the cart, disguised in his peasant's garb, walked Bosc. With breaking heart he trudged his faithful way until the tumbril passed Sophie Grandchamps' house. She stood there at the window, keeping the fearful vigil and, seeing her, Bosc rushed up the steps and the two friends clung together in a passion of anguish.

Marie stooped to the man beside her in the swaying cart and tried to comfort him. Then when they had turned off the bridge out upon the Quai de Mégisserie, she looked off to the left toward the Pont-Neuf. One last glance toward the house of rosy brick where the old trees were tossing against stormy sunset clouds. What pregnant memories

must have arisen then! How she must have said to the little girl, Manon Philipon, "It was for this you read Rousseau and dreamed there at the window by the river!" Still the river! How often she had wandered this way with François Buzot. Now she had to renounce life itself beside the river. To the end a daughter of the Seine.

"Down with the rascals! Death to the woman Roland!"

Between the howling press of people the cart reaches the Place of the Three Marys and turns north. Three blocks in that direction and to the west stands the mansion where last year she had been at work for the Republic. But the way is not so far. West again on the rue Saint-Honoré, past the old Church of Saint-Roch, soon to be the scene of Bonaparte's first scrimmage, past the house of Robespierre whose life she once had tried to save. He could have saved her now by one brief word, could have destroyed at a stroke the accusation signed by that other loyal friend, Jean-Nicolas Pache. Ah, well, she had done with it all! And she had lived!

One of the spectators, who watched the passage of this woman who was to become one of the most tremendous memories of the Revolution, set down his vision of Madame Roland in these words:

> Independent of my will my eyes fixed themselves upon this extraordinary woman on her way to the scaffold. Standing calmly in the cart in her white and rose frock, she appeared just as she always had. Her eyes shone with a wonderful light. Her color was fresh and brilliant

and a smile full of charm strayed across her lips. Nevertheless, she was serious and was not making light of death. Now and then she addressed to her companion words full of a gaiety spiritual and sweet which dragged a smile to his wretched face. I could not believe this woman was going to her death.

Now they are turning into the rue Royale. "Courage!" she murmurs. For they are facing the Place de la Révolution. Across its superb spaces the setting sun sweeps boldly, touching the trees on the Champs-Élysées, falling on the mellow walls, falling on the statues. Today the square is the Place de la Concorde, decorated with symbolic figures which represent the peace and harmony of France, adorned with fountains and in its very center an obelisk. This monument replaces what Madame Roland's eyes beheld as the cart approached the square. Above the surging mobs on a high platform rose the fearful silhouette she so long had held in shuddering vision—the guillotine.

A wild and ferocious chorus of yells goes up from the mob. The occupants of the approaching cart can have no doubt as to its meaning. Once more the great knife has fallen. Once more the blood lust of the Terror has been offered another victim. At last the cart stops. The journey is over. They have reached the foot of the scaffold.

Madame Roland once said that she never could wait to be assisted properly from a conveyance, but always leaped lightly from it. It was thus, bound as she was, that she now descended from the tumbril.

The soldiers gathered about the steps signaled to her to mount at once. But she turned to her companion.

"Go first," she said gently. "You have not the strength to see me die."

"But, no," replied the soldier in command, "I have orders that you are to precede."

At this Madame Roland fixed him with a wistful ghost of that smile which had first been the magnet of the Girondists at the old Hôtel Britannique. "Surely," said she, "you would not refuse a woman's last request?"

The soldier hesitated, then shrugged. Placing his hand on the shoulder of her fellow victim, he commanded, "Very well, mount, you!" The man looked gratefully into Madame Roland's eyes, and her lips formed the word, "Adieu!"

He had to be assisted up the steep flight of steps. But not the woman who followed. With a firm, light tread she reached the platform and stood calmly for one last look at the city she had loved so well. If the crowds howled then she was not aware of it. Her eyes fell upon a statue opposite, a statue dedicated to Liberty. The great, defeated passion of her life swept over her heart and consecrated its last beat. As a soldier stepped forward to adjust the blindfold she uttered the words which were to become immortal: "Oh, Liberty, how they have mocked you!" *

* More usually but less accurately quoted "O Liberty, how many crimes have been committed in thy name!"

THE END

Aftermath

IT WAS on that selfsame November day that Eudora Roland showed the heroic spirit of her famous mother. For poor Louis Bosc, maddened by anguish, rushed straight from Sophie Grandchamps to Madame Godefroid's house. Bursting into her presence, he cried, "She has perished on the scaffold! Madame Roland is no more!" He was not even aware that the room was full of little *pensionnaires* and that among them was Eudora.

Never had the child dreamed that such tragedy would be the end. Yet all unprepared as she was, she took the blow in silence. Even at that moment she could think of some one else. For to cry out would be to reveal her identity and expose her protector to the risk of being reported to the Commune for harboring the child of its enemy. It was not until Madame Godefroid got her safely into her own little chamber that Eudora's stricken heart could yield up its burden of despair and grief. History offers no instance of childish heroism to compare with this.

Marguerite Fleury for lack of such self-discipline paid dearly. So bitterly did she rail against the authorities who had destroyed her mistress that she was denounced to the Commune and clapped in

jail. However, she ultimately got free and joined Eudora—never again to be separated from her.

Eudora, however, never saw her father again. Madame Roland once said: "If I had been free and it had been my husband whom they were conducting to his death, I would have stabbed myself at the foot of the scaffold and I am certain that when Roland learns of my death he will pierce his heart."

She was right. The lonely and wretched man only hesitated upon learning of his wife's execution to decide how to follow her. He dreamed of making his way somehow to Paris to appear before the Convention and denounce the assassins for one triumphant moment before they dragged him to the guillotine. But one consideration deterred him. The property of all those executed by the State was confiscated and such an act would leave his daughter penniless. Therefore he decided on suicide. Eluding his watchful friends one evening, he walked to a lonely field and there ended his burdensome life by running upon his sword.

Practically every member of the Girondist group came to a tragic end. Those who were not captured and executed perished by their own hands. It was the latter alternative chosen by Pétion and the handsome Barbaroux. Thus, also, did François Buzot die. It may have been that Eudora learned the story of her mother's great and tragic romance, but it was not disclosed to the public until a decade after her own death. Then the historians of the period unearthed some of the letters Madame

Roland had written in prison to Buzot and found, also, the miniature of him which she had treasured and which held beneath the cardboard stuffing a notation concerning him in the hand which wrote the Memoirs.

These were first published by Bosc in 1795 to raise a fund for Eudora. Champagneux's edition followed shortly. Bosc acted for a time as Eudora's protector, but soon found a bitter truth in the jest he once shared with Madame Roland. Though he had never "made love to the mother," he found himself in love with her image reflected in her child and, realizing the fatal discrepancy between his age and hers, went to America for a year to wait or to forget. The rest of his life was tranquilly consistent. He celebrated tragic memories with his friends, won distinction for his studies in botany, and finally married. The one note of harshness in his life was the terse and savage scorn he heaped on the head of Lanthenas for deserting Madame Roland at her time of need. There is no doubt that Lanthenas was made to suffer for the rôle he played.

As for Champagneux, after the fall of Robespierre he was released from prison and for a time under the Directorate served in his old department of the Interior. He replaced Bosc as Eudora's guardian and while the latter was in America married the sixteen-year girl to his son. It was apparently a very happy match.

In due time young Madame Champagneux's property was restored to her and with Marguerite Fleury she was often at Le Clos. The old nurse

was frequently sought out by friends and admirers of Madame Roland and made to tell the tremendous story of the heroine's last days. Eudora fulfilled to the letter her mother's wish for her. She lived a busy and serene existence, bore one daughter who married well and, blessed by grandchildren, reached the age of seventy. Thus through her descendants the great Madame Roland of history is still a living part of the French Republic she helped to found.

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A DAUGHTER OF THE SEINE

The Life of Madame Roland

by

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